

# Catholic Candle

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## We are Soldiers of Christ in the Church Militant

We are soldiers of Christ, in the Church Militant. In the present Great Apostasy, we must fight for the true Traditional Catholic Faith and Morals against errors all around us.

The citadel of the Church is under attack. The knights and professional soldiers all seem to be gone – either slain or gone over to the side of Christ’s enemies. Christ and His truth must be defended. Because those who have the most responsibility to defend Christ are *not* fulfilling their duty, the duty to defend Christ’s Truth falls all the more upon the laity. We must do our best to defend the truth because *someone* must defend it and it is every Catholic’s duty to do so!

In his magnificent work, *The Liturgical Year*, Dom Guéranger recounts a similar example of how a simple layman stood in the breach of the Church’s “citadel wall”, defending the Catholic Faith, because *someone* needed to do so:

[O]n Christmas Day, 428, Nestorius [the arch-heretic who was then Patriarch of Constantinople], taking advantage of the immense concourse [crowd] which had assembled in honor of the Virgin Mother and her Child, pronounced from the episcopal pulpit the blasphemous words: “Mary did not bring forth God; her son was only a man, the instrument of the Divinity.”

The multitude shuddered with horror. Eusebius, a **simple layman**, rose to give expression to the general indignation, and protested against this impiety. Soon a more explicit protest was drawn up and disseminated in the name of the members of this grief-stricken Church. ... This *generous attitude* was the safeguard of Byzantium, and won the praise of Popes and Councils.<sup>1</sup>

This layman, Eusebius, publicly defended the Catholic Faith against the heretical Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, because *someone* had to do it.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. IV, Dom Guéranger; Feast of St. Cyril of Alexandria, February 9<sup>th</sup>, Britons Catholic Library, 1983, p.379 (emphasis, bracketed word, and paragraph break added for clarity).

Like Eusebius, we are not scholars or theologians. We are just laymen doing the best we can for Christ the King. Dom Guéranger teaches us this guiding principle:

When the shepherd becomes a wolf, the **first duty of the flock is to defend itself**. It is usual and regular, no doubt, for doctrine to descend from the bishops to the faithful, and those who are subject are not to judge their superiors.

But in the treasure of revelation there are essential doctrines which all Christians, by the very fact of their title as such, are bound to know and defend. The principle is the same whether it be a question of belief or conduct, dogma or morals. Treachery like that of Nestorius is rare in the Church, but it may happen that **some pastors keep silence** for one reason or another in circumstances **when religion itself is at stake**.

The true children of Holy Church at such times are those who walk by the light of their baptism, **not the cowardly souls** who, under the specious pretext of submission to the powers that be, **delay their opposition** to the enemy in the hope of receiving instructions which are neither necessary nor desirable.<sup>2</sup>

We are sheep obliged to defend against wolves, because we cannot stand idle while the Church is attacked. We all must do this as best we can, *walking by the light of our baptism* (as Dom Guéranger phrases it). Seemingly without the help of any “professional soldiers”, all of us must fight in our own little corners of the battle, with whatever weapons we have. We are farmers fighting with pitchforks. We are carpenters fighting with the hammers on our tool belts.

We would prefer that this fight would be left to the “professionals”. But whatever faithful “professional soldiers” might remain are also busy (somewhere) in this fight. Like Eusebius, all of us must stand in the breaches of the citadel wall because *someone* needs to do it. In truth, at all times, all members of the Church Militant should be part of the fight. However, in our extraordinary times, our responsibility has increased because of the lack of large armies of faithful “professional soldiers” in the Church Militant, to help us and to defend us.

## Conclusion

So, let us fight the best we can, although we are ill-equipped for this fight. We must choose the best weapons we have – *e.g.*, a pitchfork, because we have no gun.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. IV, Dom Guéranger; Feast of St. Cyril of Alexandria, February 9<sup>th</sup>, Britons Catholic Library, 1983, p.379 (emphasis, bracketed word, and paragraph break added for clarity).

As true Soldiers of Christ, we must not be deterred because we are outnumbered, ill-equipped or “out-gunned”.

We must keep fighting, even though we are “nobodies” and are our King’s “unprofitable servants”.<sup>3</sup>

As true Soldiers of Christ, we must never stop fighting because we are tired and want peace with the world.

If we are Soldiers of Christ who are worthy of the name, we must fight for love of Christ the King, *each in his own way, each doing the best he can in the “battles” Christ sends us to fight.*

Let us go forth to battle!

***Catholic Candle* note:** The article below echoes Our Lady of La Salette, referring to modernist Rome as the seat of the Antichrist. However, a reader would be mistaken if he assumed that this somehow means that Pope Francis is not the pope. He is the pope but is a bad pope.

Sedevacantism is wrong and is (material or formal) schism. *Catholic Candle* is not sedevacantist. On the contrary, we published a series of articles showing that sedevacantism is false (and also showing that former Pope Benedict is not still the pope). Read the articles here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/against-sedevacantism.html>

Here is what St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Doctor of the Church, teaches concerning the need to recognize and respect the authority of a superior – such as the pope – even when that superior is bad:

Even should the life of any superior be so notoriously wicked as to admit of no excuse or dissimulation, nevertheless, for God’s sake, Who is the source of all power, we are bound to honor such a one, not on account of his personal merits, which are non-existent, but because of the divine ordination and the dignity of his office.<sup>4</sup>

However, even while recognizing the pope’s authority and our duty to obey him when we are able, we know we must resist the evil he says and does. Read more about this

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<sup>3</sup> Our Lord instructed us: “When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do.” *St. Luke’s Gospel*, 17:10

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Third Sermon for Advent, entitled: *On the Three Advents of the Lord and the Seven Pillars which we ought to Erect within us.*

principle here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/against-sedevacantism.html#section-7>

## Why Is It Taking So Long for the Liberal SSPX To Make a Deal With Liberal Rome?

Out of necessity, the liberal SSPX had to adopt a policy of gradualism in order to retain its followers, keep them in the dark, and forestall their understanding what liberal compromises they will have to accept in order to get a deal.

Both Rome and the N-SSPX realize that the followers of the Society are not yet ready to approve 100% of Vatican II, the new mass, and parishes subject to the (so-called) “bishops” of the conciliar church. If such a deal were made today, Rome and the N-SSPX fear mass defections.

Thus, the N-SSPX has adopted a policy of gradualism, moving slowly, ever so slowly, into greater liberalism. They hide what they can get away with, as they have done since the death of Archbishop Lefebvre.

A policy of gradualism means that, little-by-little, N-SSPX followers are accepting things they have previously rejected. Listed below are some of the points of the gradualism *game plan*, plus some trial balloons.

1. The Society never preaches against VC II or Rome’s heresies. They just mention them when necessary, but never severely criticize them or openly reject them.
2. The N-SSPX joins in celebrations with the conciliar church, nationally or locally, to promote acceptance of, and union with, the conciliar church. (A trial balloon)
3. The Society is conditioning its followers to receive conciliar “bishops” or “priests” at N-SSPX parishes. (A trial balloon)
4. The Society will punish any priest who objects to the game plan of fully accepting the conciliar church eventually.
5. N-SSPX leaders now show by their own example that it is okay to attend the new mass. (A trial balloon)
6. They are slowly liberalizing their followers, just as Rome liberalized nearly all Catholics after the Second Vatican Council. Slowly, but inexorably, until the drastic and disastrous changes are completely accepted.
7. The N-SSPX now says that the new mass is one of the ways we can obtain grace.

8. From time-to-time, the N-SSPX puts out liberal trial balloons to test for acceptance or rejection of various proposals.
9. The Society openly accepts 95% of VC II. (A trial balloon) 100% acceptance will come later.
10. The N-SSPX publicly thanked Rome for a false “freeing” of the Mass (the July 2007 *motu proprio*) which could not, and did not, help uncompromising priests (because they could not use the *motu proprio* without accepting the new mass).
11. The N-SSPX publicly thanked Rome for the false “lifting” of the supposed excommunications of the SSPX bishops, even though:
  - a. the excommunications are/were unjust, void and never had true force of law;
  - b. Rome in effect merely lifted the *punishment* but continues to claim the excommunications are justified; and
  - c. The (supposed) excommunications continued against Archbishop Lefebvre and Bishop Castro Meyer.
12. By accepting the following elements of ordinary jurisdiction from Rome, the N-SSPX creates a need for a deal with Rome and a supposed need to be under the control of the conciliar church. (The SSPX has – and always has had – sacramental jurisdiction, because of the *State of Emergency* in the human element of the Church.)
  - a. Accepting and thanking Rome for giving the N-SSPX ordinary jurisdiction for hearing confessions. (A trial balloon)
  - b. Accepting and thanking Rome for giving the N-SSPX ordinary jurisdiction for marriages. **BUT THEY MUST ASK THE LOCAL DIOCESE TO PERFORM THE MARRIAGES AND ACCEPT THE LOCAL CONCILIAR “PRIEST” IF HE AGREES TO COME TO PERFORM THE MARRIAGE.** (A trial balloon)
13. To avoid being criticized for trying to obtain recognition from the anti-Catholic conciliar church, the N-SSPX states there is no conciliar church, only the Catholic Church. (Contrary to what Archbishop Lefebvre and the OLD SSPX taught.)

The reason Rome doesn't want mass defections from the N-SSPX is to avoid a strong resistance against Rome's heresies, similar to the old SSPX started by Archbishop Lefebvre. Rome would have to start all over again to subvert it, as they have subverted the current liberal N-SSPX.

Conciliar church leaders in Rome insist that the N-SSPX must accept 100% of the new mass and the evils of VC II. So, you can see it will take some time to put the followers of the Society sufficiently “to sleep” so that they will accept a Rome-sponsored deal. It is more than likely Rome will win again, as it has with six other supposedly-traditional religious societies that made a devastating liberal deal with the seat of the Antichrist, Rome.<sup>5</sup>

Hang strong, pilgrims, in the real resistance! God will triumph!

## **A Deeper Mistrust of Self: Self-Complacency vs. a Real Compassion for My Neighbor**

### ***Objective Truth Series – reflections article #6***

The last reflection showed how self-complacency is such a poison for souls because it leads to pride. Because self-complacency is a satisfaction with oneself, it naturally leads one to think less of his neighbor. This is why St. Paul warns us when he says, “Let nothing be done through contention<sup>6</sup>: neither by vain glory: but in humility, let all esteem others better than themselves” (*Philippians*, 2:3).

The devil, having an angelic nature, knows how to trap us poor humans. We must remember that the devil was the highest angel and his nature didn’t change with his fall, albeit that he is blind with his pride. The devil tempted Eve with pride, and Adam fell through pride, by caring more about Eve than he did about God. Thus, humans, through the fall of Adam, are blind. The will is blind and needs the intellect to inform it, and pride is blind, thus, we have a sort of double blindness.

And in this double blindness, it is so easy to get comfortable with ourselves and think that, after all, we are not so bad. We fall into finding fault in our neighbor and not finding any fault(s) in ourselves. As Our Lord said, we tend to look for motes in our brother’s eye and not see the beam in our own eye.

We can even think that we want to help our neighbor and instruct him on some point. Yet, do we think carefully on whether it is our place to instruct him? If we conclude that we should in charity instruct our neighbor, and/or stand up for the Faith, what steps do we take in our plan of action? Do we consider ourselves carefully as St. Paul also warns, “Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” (*Galatians*, 6:1).

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<sup>5</sup> Read about the disastrous compromises of the “traditional” groups which have made a deal with Rome, here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/sspx-societies-made-deal.html>

<sup>6</sup> Contention = to strive in opposition or rivalry; to compete, to vie; to strive for superiority.

One way to have a deeper mistrust of ourselves is to ask ourselves about our own motives for wanting to instruct another; to be sure that we really want to instruct for God's glory and not our own. (e.g. "Am I seeking praise or recognition?")

If we conclude that we want to instruct truly for God's greater glory, then we must be careful about the method we use to instruct or help our neighbor as St. Paul further warns, "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." *Galatians*, 6:2-3. Again, St. Paul warns us, "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (*Colossians*, 3:2-14).

Thus, we must work for our neighbor with forbearance, patience, and mercy. Obviously, one way to do this is to find out all we can about what our neighbor understands about the topic of instruction. Then we can patiently work at our neighbor's level and bring him slowly to the level of understanding which God has been so merciful to have given us. (It may even happen that it is we ourselves who are ignorant of the truth and our neighbor actually ends up instructing us.)

In addition to these points, we should carefully consider our neighbor's perspective based on his gender, temperament, background, upbringing, past experiences, and habits. Then we can more easily put ourselves in his shoes in order to understand and compassionate him; thus imitating Our Lord. "The Lord is merciful and compassionate: long-suffering and plenteous in mercy." Ps. 102:8.

This shows our neighbor our charity towards him, and that we are not looking down on him or pre-judging him. Our neighbor can then feel that charity which is "the bond of perfection" of which St. Paul speaks. Furthermore, our actions would also show our neighbor that we take St. Paul's warning against contention seriously, and we want to be cautious and avoid becoming puffed up.

Our Lord not only had empathy (putting Himself in our shoes, as it were), but He actually took on human nature and became a man. This also shows that He had more than empathy for us, but namely, compassion for us – so much so that He actually suffered and died for us.

Dear reader, is it not wonderful that Our Lord has shown us such wonderful examples of how we can be compassionate towards our neighbor and work in His Vineyard for love of Him! Yet, with fear and trembling we do our work for Him and beg His mercy for us and our neighbor, saying, perhaps:

Oh Divine Lord, please do help me,  
Compassionate on others be,  
Without Thy help, I can know naught,  
The truth I know, Thou hast me taught.

In these sad times, of such great need,  
When souls are seeking the good seed,  
Fill my heart with mercy like Thee,  
So, Thy mercy, others can see.

We all need kind understanding,  
And patience in befriending,  
Forbearance Thou didst likewise show,  
Thou wouldst for perfection to grow.

## **We have a duty to publicly correct our public scandals, even those we caused innocently**

When we mislead other people – even innocently – we must correct the harm we caused by telling them (*i.e.*, warning them) of our previous error. This is like crashing into our neighbor's car with our own car. Justice requires that we must restore the loss we cause our neighbor, even if we caused the accident innocently.

Similarly, if we recommend a handyman to a neighbor (who is looking to hire one) and then we discover that handyman is a thief or is incompetent, we must warn that neighbor and not ignore this duty on the excuse that we did not know of the handyman's dishonesty or incompetence *at the time* we made our innocent recommendation. In other words, we caused our neighbor the harm of receiving false information and we must correct the harm we caused.

Not only does justice require us to correct the harm we caused when we misled someone (however innocently), but charity also requires this, because we would want our neighbor to do this for us. We must love our neighbor as ourselves.

Just as we have this duty to one person when we harm one person with false information, likewise we have the duty to many people, when we give false information to many. Similarly, when we publicly give false information (however innocently), we must correct the harm we caused the public by correcting our error publicly.

St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, teaches this truth: *viz.* that everyone has a duty to *publicly correct his public errors*. Here are his words:

## **A public fault calls for a public remedy.<sup>7</sup>**

Notice that St. Thomas does not teach that a public retraction (correction) of our public error is only required when we knowingly and culpably committed the public error. We must publicly correct our public falsehoods, misleading statements, and other wrongs even when we commit them innocently.

## ***Words to Live by* – from Catholic Tradition**

*The Imitation of Christ:*

It is God's prerogative to give grace and to console when He wishes, as much as He wishes, and whom He wishes, as it shall please Him, and no more.

*My Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis, Book III, Chapter 7.

## **The Catholic Church permits a dying person to confess to a compromising or bad priest**

As a general rule, in normal times, weekly confession is an excellent practice. But during the current Great Apostasy, there are no uncompromising priests to confess to, at least in most places. Priests who are objectively compromising are not an option and we should avoid them. This situation – the world now being a “sacramental desert” – has lasted a long time already and might continue to last a long time.

Being completely without the Mass and sacraments, at least in most places, fits with the revelation given to Sister Lucy of Fatima, that:

God is giving two last remedies to the world. These are the Holy Rosary and Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These are the last two remedies which signify that there will be no others.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, quoting the Benedictine abbot, Blessed Rabanus, in *Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, translated by M.F. Toal, D.D., Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, © 1957, vol. 4, page 313 (emphasis added).

<sup>8</sup> Words of Sister Lucia dos Santos of Fatima in her interview with Father Augustin Fuentes, December 26, 1957. This interview can be found at: [http://radtradthomist.chojnowski.me/2019/03/is-this-interview-that-caused-her.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+RadtradThomist+%28RadTrad+Thomist%29](http://radtradthomist.chojnowski.me/2019/03/is-this-interview-that-caused-her.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+RadtradThomist+%28RadTrad+Thomist%29)

Sister Lucy's words show that, as of 1957 (shortly before Vatican II), God was giving these last two remedies, which continue to be the last two remedies in our time. In these words, she seems to indicate that the Mass and sacraments will not be available to uncompromising Catholics at the present time, at least in most places.

Because uncompromising Catholics refuse Masses and sacraments from a compromising or bad priest, God blesses those Catholics through other means instead. God does not abandon them. He merely changes His means of sanctifying them to fit the circumstances into which He lovingly put them.<sup>9</sup> They should be perfectly content without the Mass and sacraments, as long as God wills that the Mass and sacraments are unavailable without compromise.<sup>10</sup>

When God wills that His dear children are without the Mass and sacraments for a time, He gives the incalculably precious gift of a great increase in Faith. We see that illustrated in the love and devotion of the faithful Catholics living during the Masonic French Revolution, as recounted by Bishop Bruté, who lived through that period in France. Here is how Bishop Bruté described this priceless increase in Faith among the French Catholics who were living without the Sacraments:

How strong and imperishable was [the Catholic Faith's] hold upon thousands of hearts; how fervently did every true Christian family pledge its love and life to our blessed Lord; how constantly did Christian mothers require of their offspring, that, no matter what happened, they would never forget their duty to God. With how much anxiety, and yet fidelity, did they endeavor, especially on

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<sup>9</sup> For example, God has given an increased power to the Holy Rosary during the present Great Apostasy, because Mass and the Sacraments are unavailable to uncompromising Catholics, at least in most places. Sister Lucy, seer at Fatima, revealed this truth in the following words addressed to Fr. Fuentes:

God is giving two last remedies to the world: the Holy Rosary and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. ... Prayer and sacrifice are the two means to save the world. As for the Holy Rosary, Father, in these last times in which we are living, the Blessed Virgin has given a new efficacy to the praying of the Holy Rosary. This in such a way that there is no problem that cannot be resolved by praying the Rosary, no matter how difficult it is – be it temporal or above all spiritual ....

Words of Sister Lucy seer at Fatima, from her December 26, 1957 interview by Fr. Augustin Fuentes, vice-postulator of the cause of beatification for Francisco and Jacinta. (Emphasis added.) This interview can be found at: [http://radtradthomist.chojnowski.me/2019/03/is-this-interview-that-caused-her.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+RadtradThomist+%28RadTrad+Thomist%29](http://radtradthomist.chojnowski.me/2019/03/is-this-interview-that-caused-her.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+RadtradThomist+%28RadTrad+Thomist%29)

<sup>10</sup> Read more about this truth here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/complete-contentment-without-the-mass-when-it-is-not-available-without-compromise.html>

Sundays, to supply the want of public exercises of Religion and sanctify the day in their family.<sup>11</sup>

Bishop Bruté referred to that period as “a time when all those virtues [*viz.*, Faith, Hope and Charity] acquired additional merit, by the test they were put to.” *Id.*, p.171. Throughout the world, we are now living in a comparable – and comparably glorious – time to fight for Christ and to sanctify our souls.

Being unable to confess to an uncompromising priest, is it possible for Catholics to still make a final confession on their deathbed, without compromising? As explained below, such a confession could be possible, because of the Catholic Church’s unique, broader permission given to a person on his deathbed to confess even to a compromise or bad priest.

**The Church’s traditional law permits a dying person to confess, without compromising, to a compromise or bad priest.**

In the 1917 Code of Canon Law, Canon §882 states, in pertinent part:

*In danger of death*, any priest, even one not otherwise approved<sup>12</sup> for hearing confessions, may validly and licitly absolve any penitent from whatever sins ....<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Quoted from *Memoirs of Bishop Bruté*, by Bishop James Bayley, from the chapter called *Our Sundays in 1793*, p.169, Sadlier & Co., New York, 1861.

<sup>12</sup> The 1917 Code of Canon Law was intended for use in normal times in the Church. There are many provisions which do not apply during the particular emergency circumstances in which we now live. This is because the *Salvation of Souls is the Highest Law* (“*Salus Animarum, Lex Suprema*”) and the Church’s laws should not be used to harm souls.

Examples of canon laws which are not presently (and practically) applicable, include the requirement that Catholics fulfill their Sunday obligation by attending Mass, whereas this is impossible in most places because there is no uncompromising Mass to attend.

Similarly, the requirement that a priest have normal jurisdiction for confessions and marriages does not apply to emergency times when the very reason that an uncompromising priest is denied this jurisdiction is because he opposes the errors and evils of the hierarchy which gives such jurisdiction. Any uncompromising priests, wherever they are, would have supplied jurisdiction to provide these sacraments based on the state of necessity, because the faithful need them and have no other access to them.

Where Canon §882 broadly permits a dying person to confess to a priest not otherwise approved, that permission should be understood to refer to an objectively compromising or bad priest, who otherwise should be avoided.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from the 1917 Code of Canon Law, Canon §882 (emphasis added).

The Council of Trent established the permission in this form (*viz.*, quoted immediately above), for a dying person to confess to a compromise or bad priest.<sup>14</sup> However, this permission in some form, goes back long before the Council of Trent. *Id.*

### **The meaning of the phrase “in danger of death”**

What does “in danger of death” mean, as that phrase is used in Canon §882? It appears to include not only a person being on his deathbed because of a very severe illness from which he will soon die, but also other perils from which imminent death is a serious danger. Here is how one Traditional canon law commentator explained the phrase “in danger of death”:

[The] danger of death exists, not only in a very serious sickness, but also when there is danger to life from an external cause, for instance, before a battle, upon setting forth on a perilous voyage, before a difficult childbirth, *etc.*<sup>15</sup>

These examples have in common the understanding that death could occur *soon* due to a particular *foreseen* and *significant* danger. By contrast, anyone could die at any time and everyone will die of something, at some time. Poet and songwriter, Roger Whittaker, takes to an absurd (and amusing) extreme the idea that, in a way, we are all in danger of death. Whittaker declares:

They say the moment that you're born, is when you start to die.<sup>16</sup>

It would be an abuse of Canon §882 to interpret it to allow use of a compromise priest virtually anytime, rationalizing that we could die at any time. Thus, using this abusive interpretation, any car ride places us in danger of death because it could

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The 1983 conciliar Code of Canon Law is similar on this point. 1983 Code of Canon Law, §976.

However, Catholics should be *very wary* of using the 1983 conciliar code as a guide for their conduct in any situation where this conciliar code is more permissive than the 1917 code. This 1983 code permits many evils which were forbidden by the 1917 code and *which remain sinful* despite the permission and approval by the 1983 code. For example, the 1983 code permits Catholics to receive communion and other sacraments from heretical and schismatic sects. 1983 Canon 844 §2. Likewise, the 1983 code permits heretics and schismatics to receive the sacraments of the Catholic Church. 1983 Canon 844 §3.

<sup>14</sup> *A Commentary on the New [viz. 1917] Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. P. Chas. Augustine, O.S.B., D.D., Book III, Vol. IV, Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1920, page 287.

<sup>15</sup> *A Commentary on the New [viz. 1917] Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. P. Chas. Augustine, O.S.B., D.D., Book III, Vol. IV, Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1920, page 287.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from *The First Hello, the Last Goodbye*, found here: <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/364465/Roger+Whittaker/The+First+Hello,+the+Last+Goodbye>

result in a fatal accident. Similarly, any sneeze could develop into death by pneumonia.

These are clearly false interpretations of Canon §882. Rather, ***this canon shows us that normally it is forbidden to confess to a compromise/bad priest*** except when we are in danger of an ***imminent*** death, that is, in significant danger of dying soon, from a foreseeable cause.

**The permission given in Canon §882 applies to valid priests, but apparently not to doubtfully-ordained (doubtfully-valid) “priests”.**

This extraordinary permission to confess without compromising, to a compromise or bad priest, applies to any priest who is validly ordained. One Traditional canon law commentator explained that this permission includes confession to:

**any validly ordained priest**, even though belonging to a heretical or schismatic sect, or apostatized or censured”.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, uncompromising Catholics in danger of death, could confess to any of the priests who were ordained by a bishop of the N-SSPX or Bishop Williamson’s group, because those priests are validly ordained, although they compromise Faith and morals. Such priests include those sedevacantist priests who were originally ordained by Archbishop Lefebvre.

But this permission apparently does not extend to those (supposed) “priests” whose “ordinations” are doubtful, *e.g.*, those “priests” who obtain their “ordinations” from:

- The Thuc line<sup>18</sup>;

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<sup>17</sup> *A Commentary on the New [viz. 1917] Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. P. Chas. Augustine, O.S.B., D.D., Book III, Vol. IV, Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1920, page 287 (emphasis added).

<sup>18</sup> *Catholic Candle* holds that a priest ordained under normal conditions, by the Church in normal times, properly receives the presumption of the validity of his ordination. In other words, the fact that he was ordained under the Church’s normal conditions, in normal times, causes an appropriate presumption that he is a valid priest.

However, this presumption (of the validity of such a priest’s ordination) could be rebutted by a positive doubt concerning his particular ordination. Read more about this principle here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/new-ordination-doubtful.html>

We hold that the ordinations performed outside these normal conditions and not during normal times, do not deserve such presumption of validity because the Church does not vouch for those ordinations. Those ordinations should not be taken as valid unless they are proven.

- The Mendez line;
- William (so-called “Ambrose”) Moran;
- Use of the new conciliar rite of “ordination”<sup>19</sup>; or
- A (supposed) “bishop” who was “consecrated” using the new conciliar “consecration” rite (including the supposed “priests” in the indult groups such as the *Institute of Christ the King* and the *Fraternity of St. Peter*)<sup>20</sup>.

These doubtful “priests” are apparently not included in this permission because the “ordination” of a doubtful “priest” must be *treated* as invalid, not because we are *sure* he is not a priest, but because his “priesthood” is doubtful<sup>21</sup> and so he cannot be treated as “any validly ordained priest”<sup>22</sup>.

To help you discern between certainly-valid priests and doubtful ones, you can use *Catholic Candle’s List of Priests and Those Who claim to be Priests*.<sup>23</sup> This list contains our best information, cited to the sources. We do not intend this list as the final word on every priest listed. Rather, it is often a beginning of an uncompromising Catholic’s own investigation.

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We hold that the ordinations (as of the present date – January 2020) performed by the bishops of the N-SSPX and of Bishop Williamson’s group have been proven to be valid, even though those groups are compromising Faith and morals in other aspects.

We assess that the Thuc line, Mendez line, William Moran line and other supposed lines are, at a minimum, unproven and, on occasion, range into the obviously invalid.

<sup>19</sup> For further information about the doubtfulness of the conciliar “ordination” rite, read these analyses:

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

<sup>20</sup> For further information about the doubtfulness of the conciliar “consecration” rite, read this analysis: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B49oPuI54eEGZVF5cmFvMGdZM0U/view>

<sup>21</sup> Read more about this principle (*viz.*, our duty to *treat* doubtful ordinations as invalid) here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/new-ordination-doubtful.html>

<sup>22</sup> This phrase is quoted from *A Commentary on the New [viz. 1917] Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. P. Chas. Augustine, O.S.B., D.D., Book III, Vol. IV, Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1920, page 287.

<sup>23</sup> The list is contained here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JraFxACRV1G14LUJBL-USwIYUWIR29r6/view>

**The permission to confess to a compromise or bad priest requires that no scandal be given to the faithful.**

One of the conditions placed upon this permission for a dying person to confess to a compromise or bad priest, is that no scandal is caused by this confession. Here is how the Vatican Holy Office warned in 1864, about the danger of scandal:

When answering the question “whether it is permitted to demand absolution of a schismatic priest [when the penitent is] in danger of death if no Catholic priest is at hand”, [the Holy Office answered as follows:] Yes, provided *no scandal* is given to the faithful. ...”<sup>24</sup>

This question and answer were in the context of a validly-ordained schismatic priest. However, the same reasoning and concern would equally apply to a heretical priest or other bad or compromise priest.

Scandal is giving the appearance of evil which makes another person more likely to sin.<sup>25</sup> (In this case, the sin would be supporting or approving the bad or compromise priest.) When a dying person (and his caregivers) arrange his deathbed confession to a compromising or bad priest, it is important to guard against people being misled into believing the dying man (or his caregivers) approve of, or condone, that priest. This includes guarding against scandalizing that priest’s own parishioners since people are social creatures, and those parishioners would tend to more firmly accept their compromise priest, the more they see other people also accepting him.

**The permission to confess to a compromise or bad priest requires that there be no danger of perverting the dying person.**

Another condition placed upon this permission for dying persons to confess to a compromise or bad priest, is that even in their weakened condition there is *no danger* of being led into compromise by contact with the compromise or bad priest. Here is how the Vatican Holy Office warned in 1864, about the danger of perversion:

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted from *A Commentary on the New [viz. 1917] Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. P. Chas. Augustine, O.S.B., D.D., Book III, Vol. IV, Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1920, page 288 (emphasis added; bracketed words added for clarity).

<sup>25</sup> Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, explains this truth:

[W]hile going along the spiritual way, a man may be disposed to a spiritual downfall by another's word or deed, in so far, to wit, as one man by his injunction, inducement, or example, moves another to sin; and this is scandal properly so called.

*Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.43, a.1, *respondeo*.

When answering the question “whether it is permitted to demand absolution of a schismatic priest [when the penitent is] in danger of death if no Catholic priest is at hand”, [the Holy Office answered as follows:] Yes, provided ... **no danger** of perversion threatens the sick person ....”<sup>26</sup>

This question and answer were in the context of a validly-ordained schismatic priest. However, the same reasoning and concern would equally apply to a heretical priest or other bad or compromise priest.

In our present circumstances, it is foreseeable that some compromise or bad priests might pervert the dying person. For example, an N-SSPX priest might try to convince the dying person that he should confess his (supposed) “sin” of not attending his local N-SSPX chapel, and that the dying person should consent to burial by the N-SSPX, *etc.* Thus, by contact with such a priest, there might be a real danger of perverting an uncompromising Catholic who is in a weakened state, near death.

### **The permission to confess to a compromise or bad priest requires use of the Catholic Church’s correct, valid form of absolution.**

A further condition placed upon this permission for a dying person to confess to a compromise or bad priest, is that the compromise or bad priest use the Catholic Church’s correct, valid form of absolution. Here is how the Vatican Holy Office warned in 1864, about the required use of this valid form of absolution:

When answering the question “whether it is permitted to demand absolution of a schismatic priest [when the penitent is] in danger of death if no Catholic priest is at hand”, [the Holy Office answered as follows:] Yes, provided ... that it may be reasonably presumed that the schismatic minister will absolve according to the rite of the Church ....”<sup>27</sup>

This question and answer were in the context of a validly-ordained schismatic priest. However, the same reasoning and concern would equally apply to a heretical priest or other bad or compromise priest.

It is probable that conciliar so-called “priests” (who should not be used because of their doubtful “ordinations”, as explained above) are the ones who would be most likely to use some new conciliar invalid form of “absolution”.

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted from *A Commentary on the New [viz. 1917] Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. P. Chas. Augustine, O.S.B., D.D., Book III, Vol. IV, Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1920, page 288 (emphasis added; bracketed words added for clarity).

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from *A Commentary on the New [viz. 1917] Code of Canon Law*, by Rev. P. Chas. Augustine, O.S.B., D.D., Book III, Vol. IV, Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1920, page 288 (bracketed words added for clarity).

**Even when a person is dying, he is not permitted to receive Extreme Unction or to receive the Blessed Sacrament from a compromising or bad priest.**

Apparently, because a dying person's confession is of greater importance to his salvation than receiving the Blessed Sacrament or Extreme Unction, the Traditional Catholic law (Canon §882) permits confessing to a compromise or bad priest but does not give an equivalent permission to a dying person to receive those other sacraments.

**Although a dying person is permitted to confess to a compromising/bad priest, that does not mean that he will be able to find such a priest who is willing to hear his confession and absolve him.**

A *Catholic Candle* reader recently informed us that she tried to receive confession from an N-SSPX priest based on the permission given in Canon §882. Further, she told him she did not want to receive Communion from him. The priest refused her absolution.

**Although a person in danger of death is *permitted* to confess to a compromising or bad priest, is it *better* (and more pleasing to God) to do so?**

The Catholic Church permits some things that She does not recommend. For example, the Church permits marrying a non-Catholic, but never recommends it.

Because Canon §882 gives a person permission, when in danger of death, to confess to a compromising or bad priest, we know that it is not wrong to do so. However, Canon §882 simply *permits* this confession. The code does not go further and affirmatively *recommend* making such a confession. Canon §882 does not strongly endorse such a confession, using language such as “whenever possible ...” or “wherever a dying person is able ...”.

Canon §882's mere permission raises this question:

Could it be better, higher, and more noble to decline such a confession to a compromise/bad priest if the dying person does so out of love for God and for the Catholic Faith, in order to stay away from such a priest?

That is a very good question! Here are three things to consider:

- A Catholic can make a perfect act of contrition, with the desire to receive the sacrament of Penance if it were available. This perfect contrition restores a person to the state of grace when he is in mortal sin.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Here is how the *Catholic Encyclopedia* explains this truth:

- Perhaps any dying person who is conscious of mortal sin on his soul should confess under Canon §882, not trusting that his contrition is perfect. Often a dying person, especially if he is in mortal sin, has more sorrow for his sins because he fears hell (imperfect contrition) than because he loves God (perfect contrition).
- Perhaps any dying person should confess under Canon §882 because the essential fruits of a sacrament do not depend on the state of soul of a priest, even a compromising or bad priest.

**Examples to consider: the deaths of King Louis XVI of France, General Charette, and Queen Marie-Antoinette, all executed by the Masonic Revolutionaries of France**

During the French Revolution, the Masonic, anti-Catholic revolutionaries required that all priests swear an oath of loyalty to the new Masonic constitution. Pope Pius VI declared those priests who swore this oath to be “heretical and schismatic”.<sup>29</sup> Most priests swore this evil oath but some did not.

In 1793, after the French Masonic revolutionaries sentenced King Louis XVI to death, he asked to make a final confession to a priest of his choice. The revolutionaries permitted this and the king confessed to a priest who had not sworn an oath of loyalty to the revolutionary constitution.<sup>30</sup>

When the Masonic revolutionaries condemned to death the royalist, counter-revolutionary general, General Charette, he likewise asked to make his last confession to a priest who had not sworn an oath to the revolutionary constitution. The revolutionaries refused Charette’s request and so he confessed to a priest who had taken the oath.<sup>31</sup> Charette was permitted to do this under the conditions set out in the 1917 Canon Law §882 (and the Catholic Church’s predecessor law in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century).

When the Masonic revolutionaries condemned Queen Marie-Antoinette to death, she likewise asked to make a last confession to a priest who had not sworn the oath. The

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Perfect contrition, with the desire of receiving the Sacrament of Penance, restores the sinner to grace at once. This is certainly the teaching of the Scholastic doctors (Peter Lombard in P.L., CXCII, 885; St. Thomas, In Lib. Sent. IV, *ibid.*; St. Bonaventure, In Lib. Sent. IV, *ibid.*).

1917 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 4, article: *Contrition*, page 339.

<sup>29</sup> Taken from the electronic edition of Michael Davies’ book *For Altar and Throne*.

<sup>30</sup> Taken from the electronic edition of Michael Davies’ book *For Altar and Throne*.

<sup>31</sup> Taken from the electronic edition of Michael Davies’ book *For Altar and Throne*.

revolutionaries refused her request and offered her only a priest who had sworn the oath. The queen refused him and she went to her death without confession.<sup>32</sup>

Did Queen Marie-Antoinette do the better, nobler thing and take the higher course? The answer seems difficult to know. Whether or not she did the better thing, we can admire her firmness of Faith, if that is the cause of her stalwart refusal to have any part with a bad and compromising priest. For, as St. Paul teaches:

For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?

2 *Corinthians*, 6:14-15.

The queen refused the oath-swearing priest in the context of the heroic stand which had been taken by her people in the Vendee region of France, against the revolution. In the Vendee, the Catholics were so hostile to the compromising priests that those oath-taking priests often needed armed guards to protect them from the people, and those compromising priests were hooted at, jeered, and even kicked when they appeared in public.<sup>33</sup>

The good Catholics of the Vendee were brave and noble soldiers of Christ indeed! It is in this context that we perhaps see Queen Marie-Antoinette's motive in refusing to confess to an oath-taking priest. Possibly she took the higher, nobler, and better road than her general, Charette.

It also seems that we Catholics now should take the Catholics of the Vendee as models of fighting for the Faith and opposing error – in their firmness of Faith unto death, although not in their physically attacking compromising priests!

## Conclusion

When we are near death, Canon §882 allows us to confess to a compromising or bad priest, under certain conditions. This confession:

- ❖ must not cause scandal;
- ❖ must not expose the dying person to perversion by the compromising priest;
- ❖ requires that the priest's ordination be valid, without doubts; and
- ❖ requires that the priest use the Church's valid form of absolution.

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<sup>32</sup> 1917 Catholic Encyclopedia, article: *Marie-Antoinette*.

<sup>33</sup> Taken from the electronic edition of Michael Davies' book *For Altar and Throne*.

If those conditions are met, then a dying person is permitted to make this confession.

## **We invite you to download our 2020 Catholic calendar**

We invite you to download and print or freely distribute our 2020 traditional Catholic calendar.

- ❖ Here is our calendar for subscribers outside the U.S. (A4 paper size):  
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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/167ErvpUe10VD7yayeLUyQMp0JBU77wRh/view>

Our website contains instructions for making a hanging calendar.  
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