

Papal Teaching Against the Heresy of Indifferentism

Nine consecutive popes, spanning 135 years, taught against the heresy of indifferentism. Such a strong opposition against any error is unprecedented. Yet, it is not just the modern popes who teach against this heresy, but Christ Himself, the Apostles, Church Fathers, Doctors, Councils, and many saints.

Here are *just a few* quotations from papal teaching. Taken together, and in conformity with all Catholic tradition, this indisputably belongs to the *ordinary and universal* teaching of the magisterium, which is in fact infallible. Hence, no subsequent authority on earth, even a pope, has the right to teach the contrary.

You are encouraged to look these documents up yourself. Read them in their complete context. Become familiar with this very important teaching and share this ‘good news’ of salvation with others. All of these documents can be read online for free at www.papalencyclicals.net.

Leo XII (1823-1829), *Ubi Primum* (1824), the pope’s inaugural address:

(#12): A certain sect has unjustly arrogated to itself the name of philosophy, and has aroused from ashes the disorderly ranks of practically every error. Under the gentle appearance of piety and liberality this sect professes what they call tolerance or indifferentism. It preaches that ... God has given every individual a wide freedom to embrace and adopt, without danger to his salvation, whatever sect or opinion appeals to him on the basis of his private judgment. The apostle Paul warns us against the impiety of these madmen.

(#13) Of course this error is not new ... this indifferentism seemed absurd to St. Augustine, and rightly so, but in his day it did acknowledge some limits. But a tolerance which extends to Deism and Naturalism, which even the ancient heretics rejected, can never be approved by anyone who uses his reason. Nevertheless - alas for the times; alas for this lying philosophy! - such a tolerance is approved, defended and praised by these pseudo-philosophers.

(#19) In virtue of our apostolic office, We too exhort you to try every means of keeping your flock from those deadly pastures.

Gregory XVI (1831-1846), *Mirari Vos* (1832), on Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism:

(#13) Now We consider another abundant source of the evils with which the Church is afflicted at present: indifferentism. This perverse opinion is spread on all sides by the fraud of the wicked who claim that it is possible to obtain the eternal salvation of the soul by the profession of any kind of religion, as long as morality is maintained. Surely, in so clear a matter, you will drive this deadly error far from the people committed to your care. With the admonition of the apostle that “there is one God, one faith, one baptism” may those fear who contrive the notion that the safe harbor of salvation is open to persons of any religion whatever. They should consider the testimony of Christ Himself that “those who are not with Christ are against Him,” and that they disperse unhappily who do not gather with Him. Therefore “without a doubt, they will perish forever, unless they hold the Catholic faith whole and inviolate.”

(#14) This shameful font of indifferentism gives rise to that absurd and erroneous proposition which claims that liberty of conscience must be maintained for everyone. It spreads ruin in sacred and civil affairs. ... Then truly “the bottomless pit” is open from which John saw smoke ascending which obscured the sun, and out of which locusts flew forth to devastate the earth. Thence comes transformation of minds, corruption of youths, contempt of sacred things and holy laws — in other words, a pestilence more deadly to the state than any other.

Pius IX (1846-1878), *Quanto Conficiamur* (1863), on the promotion of false doctrines:

(#7) It is again necessary to mention and censure a very grave error entrapping some Catholics who believe that it is possible to arrive at eternal salvation although living in error and alienated from the true faith and Catholic unity. Such belief is certainly opposed to Catholic teaching.... (#8) Also well known is the Catholic teaching that no one can be saved outside the Catholic Church. Eternal salvation cannot be obtained by those who oppose the authority and statements of the same Church and are stubbornly separated from the unity of the Church and also from the successor of Peter, the Roman Pontiff...

Pius IX, *Quanta Cura* (1864), the “cover letter” for the Syllabus of Errors:

(#6) Amidst, therefore, such great perversity of depraved opinions, we, well remembering our Apostolic Office, and very greatly solicitous for our most holy Religion, for sound doctrine and the salvation of souls which is entrusted to us by God, and (solicitous also) for the welfare of human society itself, have thought it right again to raise up our Apostolic voice. Therefore, *by our Apostolic authority, we reprobate, proscribe, and condemn* all the singular and evil opinions and doctrines severally mentioned in this letter, *and will and command that they be thoroughly held by all children of the Catholic Church as reprobated, proscribed and condemned.* [emphasis added highlighting papal infallible authority is being invoked].

Pius IX, *Syllabus Errorum* (1864), a ‘syllabus’ condemning errors of our time:

15. Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true.
16. Man may, in the observance of any religion whatever, find the way of eternal salvation, and arrive at eternal salvation.
17. Good hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ.
18. Protestantism is nothing more than another form of the same true Christian religion, in which form it is given to please God equally as in the Catholic Church.

Leo XIII (1878-1903), *Humanum Genus* (1884), on the evil of freemasonry:

(#16): If those who are admitted as members are not commanded to abjure by any form of words the Catholic doctrines, this omission, so far from being adverse to the designs of the Freemasons is more useful for their purposes. First, in this way they easily deceive the simple-minded and the heedless, and can induce a far greater number to become members. Again, as all who offer themselves are received whatever may be their form of religion, they thereby teach the great error of this age — that a regard for religion should be held as an indifferent matter, and that all religions are alike. This manner of reasoning is calculated to bring about the ruin of all forms of religion, and especially of the Catholic religion, which, as it is the only one that is true, cannot, without great injustice, be regarded as merely equal to other religions.

Other excellent encyclicals by Leo XIII regarding the error of indifferentism are:

Libertas Praestantissimum (1888), on the Nature of True Liberty, and
Immortale Dei (1885), on the Christian Constitution of States.

Pius X (1903-1914), *Notre Charge Apostolique* (1910), on the 'Sillon,' an early 20th century workers' 'social justice' movement in France which accepted the principle of indifferentism:

(#36): Here we have, founded by Catholics, an inter-denominational association that is to work for the reform of civilization, an undertaking which is above all religious in character; for there is no true civilization without a moral civilization, and no true moral civilization without the true religion: it is a proven truth, a historical fact.

(#38) But stranger still, alarming and saddening at the same time, are the audacity and frivolity of men who call themselves Catholics and dream of re-shaping society under such conditions, and of establishing on earth, over and beyond the pale of the Catholic Church, "the reign of love and justice" with workers coming from everywhere, of all religions and of no religion, with or without beliefs, so long as they forego what might divide them – their religious and philosophical convictions, and so long as they share what unites them ... It will be a tumultuous agitation, sterile for the end proposed, but which will benefit the less Utopian exploiters of the people. Yes, we can truly say that the Sillon, its eyes fixed on a chimera, brings Socialism in its train.

(#40) ... the great movement of apostasy being organized in every country for the establishment of a One-World Church which shall have neither dogmas, nor hierarchy, neither discipline for the mind, nor curb for the passions, and which, under the pretext of freedom and human dignity, would bring back to the world (if such a Church could overcome) the reign of legalized cunning and force, and the oppression of the weak, and of all those who toil and suffer.

Pius XI (1922-1939), *Mortalium Animos* (1928), on true religious [Christian] unity:

(#2) Certainly such attempts can nowise be approved by Catholics, founded as they are on that false opinion which considers all religions to be more or less good and praiseworthy, since they all in different ways manifest and signify that sense which is inborn in us all, and by which we are led to God and to the obedient acknowledgment of His rule. Not only are those who hold this opinion in error and deceived, but also in distorting the idea of true religion they reject it, and little by little, turn aside to naturalism and atheism, as it is called; from which it clearly follows that one who supports those who hold these theories and attempt to realize them, is altogether abandoning the divinely revealed religion.

(#3) But some are more easily deceived by the outward appearance of good when there is question of fostering unity among all Christians.

(#9) This being so, it is clear that the Apostolic See cannot on any terms take part in their assemblies, nor is it anyway lawful for Catholics either to support or to work for such enterprises; for if they do so they will be giving countenance to a false Christianity, quite alien to the one Church of Christ.

(#15) So, Venerable Brethren, it is clear why this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics: for the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it, for in the past they have unhappily left it. To the one true Church of Christ, we say, which is visible to all, and which is to remain, according to the will of its Author, exactly the same as He instituted it.

Pius XII (1939-1958), *Humani Generis* (1950), on human origins and contemporary errors:

(#27) Some say they are not bound by the doctrine, explained in Our Encyclical Letter of a few years ago, and based on the sources of revelation, which teaches that the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing. Some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain eternal salvation. Others finally belittle the reasonable character of the credibility of Christian faith.