

## The Syllabus Of Errors

Pope BI. Pius IX – 1864

Please note that each of the following is considered an “error” or wrong thinking! To help keep that in focus, think “it is an error too believe that....” before you read each of the 80 errors.

### I. PANTHEISM, NATURALISM AND ABSOLUTE RATIONALISM

1. There exists no Supreme, all-wise, all-provident Divine Being, distinct from the universe, and God is identical with the nature of things, and is, therefore, subject to changes. In effect, God is produced in man and in the world, and all things are God and have the very substance of God, and God is one and the same thing with the world, and, therefore, spirit with matter, necessity with liberty, good with evil, justice with injustice. — Allocution “Maxima quidem,” June 9, 1862.
2. All action of God upon man and the world is to be denied. — Ibid.
3. Human reason, without any reference whatsoever to God, is the sole arbiter of truth and falsehood, and of good and evil; it is law to itself, and suffices, by its natural force, to secure the welfare of men and of nations. — Ibid.
4. All the truths of religion proceed from the innate strength of human reason; hence reason is the ultimate standard by which man can and ought to arrive at the knowledge of all truths of every kind. — Ibid. and Encyclical “Qui pluribus,” Nov. 9, 1846, etc.
5. Divine revelation is imperfect, and therefore subject to a continual and indefinite progress, corresponding with the advancement of human reason. — Ibid.
6. The faith of Christ is in opposition to human reason and divine revelation not only is not useful, but is even hurtful to the perfection of man. — Ibid.
7. The prophecies and miracles set forth and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures are the fiction of poets, and the mysteries of the Christian faith the result of philosophical investigations. In the books of the Old and the New Testament there are contained mythical inventions, and Jesus Christ is Himself a myth.

### II. MODERATE RATIONALISM

8. As human reason is placed on a level with religion itself, so theological must be treated in the same manner as philosophical sciences. — Allocution “Singulari quadam,” Dec. 9, 1854.
9. All the dogmas of the Christian religion are indiscriminately the object of natural science or philosophy, and human reason, enlightened solely in an historical way, is able, by its own natural strength and principles, to attain to the true science of even the most abstruse dogmas; provided only that such dogmas be proposed to reason itself as its object. — Letters to the Archbishop of Munich, “Gravissimas inter,” Dec. 11, 1862, and “Tuas libenter,” Dec. 21, 1863.

10. As the philosopher is one thing, and philosophy another, so it is the right and duty of the philosopher to subject himself to the authority which he shall have proved to be true; but philosophy neither can nor ought to submit to any such authority. — Ibid., Dec. 11, 1862.

11. The Church not only ought never to pass judgment on philosophy, but ought to tolerate the errors of philosophy, leaving it to correct itself. — Ibid., Dec. 21, 1863.

12. The decrees of the Apostolic See and of the Roman congregations impede the true progress of science. — Ibid.

13. The method and principles by which the old scholastic doctors cultivated theology are no longer suitable to the demands of our times and to the progress of the sciences. — Ibid.

14. Philosophy is to be treated without taking any account of supernatural revelation. — Ibid.

### III. INDIFFERENTISM, LATITUDINARIANISM

15. Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true. — Allocution “Maxima quidem,” June 9, 1862; Damnatio “Multiplices inter,” June 10, 1851.

16. Man may, in the observance of any religion whatever, find the way of eternal salvation, and arrive at eternal salvation. — Encyclical “Qui pluribus,” Nov. 9, 1846.

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. — Encyclical “Quanto conficiamur,” Aug. 10, 1863, etc.

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. — Encyclical “Noscitis,” Dec. 8, 1849.

### IV. SOCIALISM, COMMUNISM, SECRET SOCIETIES, BIBLICAL SOCIETIES, CLERICO-LIBERAL SOCIETIES

Pests of this kind are frequently reprobated in the severest terms in the Encyclical “Qui pluribus,” Nov. 9, 1846, Allocution “Quibus quantisque,” April 20, 1849, Encyclical “Noscitis et nobiscum,” Dec. 8, 1849, Allocution “Singulari quadam,” Dec. 9, 1854, Encyclical “Quanto conficiamur,” Aug. 10, 1863.

### V. ERRORS CONCERNING THE CHURCH AND HER RIGHTS

19. The Church is not a true and perfect society, entirely free- nor is she endowed with proper and perpetual rights of her own, conferred upon her by her Divine Founder; but it appertains to the civil power to define what are the rights of the Church, and the limits within which she may exercise those rights. — Allocution “Singulari quadam,” Dec. 9, 1854, etc.

20. The ecclesiastical power ought not to exercise its authority without the permission and assent of the civil government. — Allocution “Meminit unusquisque,” Sept. 30, 1861.

21. The Church has not the power of defining dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the only true religion. — Damnatio “Multiplices inter,” June 10, 1851.

22. The obligation by which Catholic teachers and authors are strictly bound is confined to those things only which are proposed to universal belief as dogmas of faith by the infallible judgment of the Church. — Letter to the Archbishop of Munich, “Tuas libenter,” Dec. 21, 1863.
23. Roman pontiffs and ecumenical councils have wandered outside the limits of their powers, have usurped the rights of princes, and have even erred in defining matters of faith and morals. — *Damnatio* “*Multiplices inter*,” June 10, 1851.
24. The Church has not the power of using force, nor has she any temporal power, direct or indirect. — Apostolic Letter “*Ad Apostolicæ*,” Aug. 22, 1851.
25. Besides the power inherent in the episcopate, other temporal power has been attributed to it by the civil authority granted either explicitly or tacitly, which on that account is revocable by the civil authority whenever it thinks fit. — *Ibid.*
26. The Church has no innate and legitimate right of acquiring and possessing property. — Allocution “*Nunquam fore*,” Dec. 15, 1856; Encyclical “*Incredibili*,” Sept. 7, 1863.
27. The sacred ministers of the Church and the Roman pontiff are to be absolutely excluded from every charge and dominion over temporal affairs. — Allocution “*Maxima quidem*,” June 9, 1862.
28. It is not lawful for bishops to publish even letters Apostolic without the permission of Government. — Allocution “*Nunquam fore*,” Dec. 15, 1856.
29. Favours granted by the Roman pontiff ought to be considered null, unless they have been sought for through the civil government. — *Ibid.*
30. The immunity of the Church and of ecclesiastical persons derived its origin from civil law. — *Damnatio* “*Multiplices inter*,” June 10, 1851.
31. The ecclesiastical forum or tribunal for the temporal causes, whether civil or criminal, of clerics, ought by all means to be abolished, even without consulting and against the protest of the Holy See. — Allocution “*Nunquam fore*,” Dec. 15, 1856; Allocution “*Acerbissimum*,” Sept. 27, 1852.
32. The personal immunity by which clerics are exonerated from military conscription and service in the army may be abolished without violation either of natural right or equity. Its abolition is called for by civil progress, especially in a society framed on the model of a liberal government. — Letter to the Bishop of Monreale “*Singularis nobisque*,” Sept. 29, 1864.
33. It does not appertain exclusively to the power of ecclesiastical jurisdiction by right, proper and innate, to direct the teaching of theological questions. — Letter to the Archbishop of Munich, “*Tuas libenter*,” Dec. 21, 1863.
34. The teaching of those who compare the Sovereign Pontiff to a prince, free and acting in the universal Church, is a doctrine which prevailed in the Middle Ages. — Apostolic Letter “*Ad Apostolicæ*,” Aug. 22, 1851.
35. There is nothing to prevent the decree of a general council, or the act of all peoples, from transferring the supreme pontificate from the bishop and city of Rome to another bishop and another city. — *Ibid.*

36. The definition of a national council does not admit of any subsequent discussion, and the civil authority can assume this principle as the basis of its acts. — Ibid.

37. National churches, withdrawn from the authority of the Roman pontiff and altogether separated, can be established. — Allocution “*Multis gravibusque*,” Dec. 17, 1860.

38. The Roman pontiffs have, by their too arbitrary conduct, contributed to the division of the Church into Eastern and Western. — Apostolic Letter “*Ad Apostolicæ*,” Aug. 22, 1851.

## VI. ERRORS ABOUT CIVIL SOCIETY, CONSIDERED BOTH IN ITSELF AND IN ITS RELATION TO THE CHURCH

39. The State, as being the origin and source of all rights, is endowed with a certain right not circumscribed by any limits. — Allocution “*Maxima quidem*,” June 9, 1862.

40. The teaching of the Catholic Church is hostile to the well-being and interests of society. — Encyclical “*Qui pluribus*,” Nov. 9, 1846; Allocution “*Quibus quantisque*,” April 20, 1849.

41. The civil government, even when in the hands of an infidel sovereign, has a right to an indirect negative power over religious affairs. It therefore possesses not only the right called that of “*exsequatur*,” but also that of appeal, called “*appellatio ab abusu*.” — Apostolic Letter “*Ad Apostolicæ*,” Aug. 22, 1851

42. In the case of conflicting laws enacted by the two powers, the civil law prevails. — Ibid.

43. The secular Power has authority to rescind, declare and render null, solemn conventions, commonly called concordats, entered into with the Apostolic See, regarding the use of rights appertaining to ecclesiastical immunity, without the consent of the Apostolic See, and even in spite of its protest. — Allocution “*Multis gravibusque*,” Dec. 17, 1860; Allocution “*In consistoriali*,” Nov. 1, 1850.

44. The civil authority may interfere in matters relating to religion, morality and spiritual government: hence, it can pass judgment on the instructions issued for the guidance of consciences, conformably with their mission, by the pastors of the Church. Further, it has the right to make enactments regarding the administration of the divine sacraments, and the dispositions necessary for receiving them. — Allocutions “*In consistoriali*,” Nov. 1, 1850, and “*Maxima quidem*,” June 9, 1862.

45. The entire government of public schools in which the youth of a Christian state is educated, except (to a certain extent) in the case of episcopal seminaries, may and ought to appertain to the civil power, and belong to it so far that no other authority whatsoever shall be recognized as having any right to interfere in the discipline of the schools, the arrangement of the studies, the conferring of degrees, in the choice or approval of the teachers. — Allocutions “*Quibus luctuosissimis*,” Sept. 5, 1851, and “*In consistoriali*,” Nov. 1, 1850.

46. Moreover, even in ecclesiastical seminaries, the method of studies to be adopted is subject to the civil authority. — Allocution “*Nunquam fore*,” Dec. 15, 1856.

47. The best theory of civil society requires that popular schools open to children of every class of the people, and, generally, all public institutes intended for instruction in letters and philosophical sciences and for carrying on the education of youth, should be freed from all ecclesiastical authority, control and interference, and should be fully subjected to the civil and political power at the pleasure of the rulers, and

according to the standard of the prevalent opinions of the age. — Epistle to the Archbishop of Freiburg, “Cum non sine,” July 14, 1864.

48. Catholics may approve of the system of educating youth unconnected with Catholic faith and the power of the Church, and which regards the knowledge of merely natural things, and only, or at least primarily, the ends of earthly social life. — Ibid.

49. The civil power may prevent the prelates of the Church and the faithful from communicating freely and mutually with the Roman pontiff. — Allocution “Maxima quidem,” June 9, 1862.

50. Lay authority possesses of itself the right of presenting bishops, and may require of them to undertake the administration of the diocese before they receive canonical institution, and the Letters Apostolic from the Holy See. — Allocution “Nunquam fore,” Dec. 15, 1856.

51. And, further, the lay government has the right of deposing bishops from their pastoral functions, and is not bound to obey the Roman pontiff in those things which relate to the institution of bishoprics and the appointment of bishops. — Allocution “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852, Damnatio “Multiplices inter,” June 10, 1851.

52. Government can, by its own right, alter the age prescribed by the Church for the religious profession of women and men; and may require of all religious orders to admit no person to take solemn vows without its permission. — Allocution “Nunquam fore,” Dec. 15, 1856.

53. The laws enacted for the protection of religious orders and regarding their rights and duties ought to be abolished; nay, more, civil Government may lend its assistance to all who desire to renounce the obligation which they have undertaken of a religious life, and to break their vows. Government may also suppress the said religious orders, as likewise collegiate churches and simple benefices, even those of advowson and subject their property and revenues to the administration and pleasure of the civil power. — Allocutions “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852; “Probe memineritis,” Jan. 22, 1855; “Cum saepe,” July 26, 1855.

54. Kings and princes are not only exempt from the jurisdiction of the Church, but are superior to the Church in deciding questions of jurisdiction. — Damnatio “Multiplices inter,” June 10, 1851.

55. The Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church. — Allocution “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852.

## VII. ERRORS CONCERNING NATURAL AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

56. Moral laws do not stand in need of the divine sanction, and it is not at all necessary that human laws should be made conformable to the laws of nature and receive their power of binding from God. — Allocution “Maxima quidem,” June 9, 1862.

57. The science of philosophical things and morals and also civil laws may and ought to keep aloof from divine and ecclesiastical authority. — Ibid.

58. No other forces are to be recognized except those which reside in matter, and all the rectitude and excellence of morality ought to be placed in the accumulation and increase of riches by every possible means, and the gratification of pleasure. — Ibid.; Encyclical “Quanto conficiamur,” Aug. 10, 1863.

59. Right consists in the material fact. All human duties are an empty word, and all human facts have the force of right. — Allocution “Maxima quidem,” June 9, 1862.

60. Authority is nothing else but numbers and the sum total of material forces. — Ibid.

61. The injustice of an act when successful inflicts no injury on the sanctity of right. — Allocution “Jamdudum cernimus,” March 18, 1861.

62. The principle of non-intervention, as it is called, ought to be proclaimed and observed. — Allocution “Novos et ante,” Sept. 28, 1860.

63. It is lawful to refuse obedience to legitimate princes, and even to rebel against them. — Encyclical “Qui pluribus,” Nov. 9, 1864; Allocution “Quibusque vestrum,” Oct. 4, 1847; “Noscitis et Nobiscum,” Dec. 8, 1849; Apostolic Letter “Cum Catholica.”

64. The violation of any solemn oath, as well as any wicked and flagitious action repugnant to the eternal law, is not only not blamable but is altogether lawful and worthy of the highest praise when done through love of country. — Allocution “Quibus quantisque,” April 20, 1849.

#### VIII. ERRORS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

65. The doctrine that Christ has raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament cannot be at all tolerated. — Apostolic Letter “Ad Apostolicæ,” Aug. 22, 1851.

66. The Sacrament of Marriage is only a something accessory to the contract and separate from it, and the sacrament itself consists in the nuptial benediction alone. — Ibid.

67. By the law of nature, the marriage tie is not indissoluble, and in many cases divorce properly so called may be decreed by the civil authority. — Ibid.; Allocution “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852.

68. The Church has not the power of establishing diriment impediments of marriage, but such a power belongs to the civil authority by which existing impediments are to be removed. — Damnatio “Multiplices inter,” June 10, 1851.

69. In the dark ages the Church began to establish diriment impediments, not by her own right, but by using a power borrowed from the State. — Apostolic Letter “Ad Apostolicæ,” Aug. 22, 1851.

70. The canons of the Council of Trent, which anathematize those who dare to deny to the Church the right of establishing diriment impediments, either are not dogmatic or must be understood as referring to such borrowed power. — Ibid.

71. The form of solemnizing marriage prescribed by the Council of Trent, under pain of nullity, does not bind in cases where the civil law lays down another form, and declares that when this new form is used the marriage shall be valid.

72. Boniface VIII was the first who declared that the vow of chastity taken at ordination renders marriage void. — Ibid.

73. In force of a merely civil contract there may exist between Christians a real marriage, and it is false to say either that the marriage contract between Christians is always a sacrament, or that there is no contract if the sacrament be excluded. — Ibid.; Letter to the King of Sardinia, Sept. 9, 1852; Allocutions “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852, “Multis gravibusque,” Dec. 17, 1860.

74. Matrimonial causes and espousals belong by their nature to civil tribunals. — Encyclical “Qui pluribus,” Nov. 9 1846; Damnatio “Multiplices inter,” June 10, 1851, “Ad Apostolicae,” Aug. 22, 1851; Allocution “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852.

## IX. ERRORS REGARDING THE CIVIL POWER OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF

75. The children of the Christian and Catholic Church are divided amongst themselves about the compatibility of the temporal with the spiritual power. — “Ad Apostolicae,” Aug. 22, 1851.

76. The abolition of the temporal power of which the Apostolic See is possessed would contribute in the greatest degree to the liberty and prosperity of the Church. — Allocutions “Quibus quantisque,” April 20, 1849, “Si semper antea,” May 20, 1850.

## X. ERRORS HAVING REFERENCE TO MODERN LIBERALISM

77. In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship. — Allocution “Nemo vestrum,” July 26, 1855.

78. Hence it has been wisely decided by law, in some Catholic countries, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own peculiar worship. — Allocution “Acerbissimum,” Sept. 27, 1852.

79. Moreover, it is false that the civil liberty of every form of worship, and the full power, given to all, of overtly and publicly manifesting any opinions whatsoever and thoughts, conduce more easily to corrupt the morals and minds of the people, and to propagate the pest of indifferentism. — Allocution “Nunquam fore,” Dec. 15, 1856.

80. The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.- Allocution “Jamdudum cernimus,” March 18, 1861.

The faith teaches us and human reason demonstrates that a double order of things exists, and that we must therefore distinguish between the two earthly powers, the one of natural origin which provides for secular affairs and the tranquillity of human society, the other of supernatural origin, which presides over the City of God, that is to say the Church of Christ, which has been divinely instituted for the sake of souls and of eternal salvation.... The duties of this twofold power are most wisely ordered in such a way that to God is given what is God's (Matt. 22:21), and because of God to Caesar what is Caesar's, who is great because he is smaller than heaven. Certainly the Church has never disobeyed this divine command, the Church which always and everywhere instructs the faithful to show the respect which they should inviolably have for the supreme authority and its secular rights....

... Venerable Brethren, you see clearly enough how sad and full of perils is the condition of Catholics in the regions of Europe which We have mentioned. Nor are things any better or circumstances calmer in America, where some regions are so hostile to Catholics that their governments seem to deny by their actions the Catholic faith they claim to profess. In fact, there, for the last few years, a ferocious war on the

Church, its institutions and the rights of the Apostolic See has been raging.... Venerable Brothers, it is surprising that in our time such a great war is being waged against the Catholic Church. But anyone who knows the nature, desires and intentions of the sects, whether they be called masonic or bear another name, and compares them with the nature the systems and the vastness of the obstacles by which the Church has been assailed almost everywhere, cannot doubt that the present misfortune must mainly be imputed to the frauds and machinations of these sects. It is from them that the synagogue of Satan, which gathers its troops against the Church of Christ, takes its strength. In the past Our predecessors, vigilant even from the beginning in Israel, had already denounced them to the kings and the nations, and had condemned them time and time again, and even We have not failed in this duty. If those who would have been able to avert such a deadly scourge had only had more faith in the supreme Pastors of the Church! But this scourge, winding through sinuous caverns, . . . deceiving many with astute frauds, finally has arrived at the point where it comes forth impetuously from its hiding places and triumphs as a powerful master. Since the throng of its propagandists has grown enormously, these wicked groups think that they have already become masters of the world and that they have almost reached their pre-established goal. Having sometimes obtained what they desired, and that is power, in several countries, they boldly turn the help of powers and authorities which they have secured to trying to submit the Church of God to the most cruel servitude, to undermine the foundations on which it rests, to contaminate its splendid qualities; and, moreover, to strike it with frequent blows, to shake it, to overthrow it, and, if possible, to make it disappear completely from the earth. Things being thus, Venerable Brothers, make every effort to defend the faithful which are entrusted to you against the insidious contagion of these sects and to save from perdition those who unfortunately have inscribed themselves in such sects. Make known and attack those who, whether suffering from, or planning, deception, are not afraid to affirm that these shady congregations aim only at the profit of society, at progress and mutual benefit. Explain to them often and impress deeply on their souls the Papal constitutions on this subject and teach, them that the masonic associations are anathematized by them not only in Europe but also in America and wherever they may be in the whole world.

To the Archbishops and Bishops of Prussia concerning the situation of the Catholic Church faced with persecution by that Government....

But although they (the bishops resisting persecution) should be praised rather than pitied, the scorn of episcopal dignity, the violation of the liberty and the rights of the Church, the ill treatment which does not only oppress those dioceses, but also the others of the Kingdom of Prussia, demand that We, owing to the Apostolic office with which God has entrusted us in spite of Our insufficient merit, protest against laws which have produced such great evils and make one fear even greater ones; and as far as we are able to do so with the sacred authority of divine law, We vindicate for the Church the freedom which has been trodden underfoot with sacrilegious violence. That is why by this letter we intend to do Our duty by announcing openly to all those whom this matter concerns and to the whole Catholic world, that these laws are null and void because they are absolutely contrary to the divine constitution of the Church. In fact, with respect to matters which concern the holy ministry, Our Lord did not put the mighty of this century in charge, but Saint Peter, whom he entrusted not only with feeding his sheep, but also the goats; therefore no power in the world, however great it may be, can deprive of the pastoral office those whom the Holy Ghost has made Bishops in order to feed the Church of God.