

*Must I agree with everything our Church teaches?*

When we reject one item of Catholic doctrine or morals we are, in effect, rejecting the teaching authority of the Church. Once we reject this authority we lose our anchor of truth and float off in dangerous currents. Jesus empowered His Church leadership to protect, interpret, and teach His Revelation to future generations. We who have been gifted with this God-given help are not free, in good conscience, to reject it in favor of our own desires. We are not capable of effectively finding our eternal way without God's help.

Our ideas are not better than God's even if we think so. It is truth that sets us free, not opinion. Knowing this, Jesus set up what we today call the Magisterium. This is the guaranteed teaching authority He initiated with His apostles. Jesus did not leave us orphans to fend for ourselves on our journey to heaven. God doesn't want us to follow popular gurus or worldly psychologists to decide right from wrong or truth from lies. It also was obviously not God's plan in the Old Testament or the New for each independent individual with his Bible alone to arrive at true faith and morals. From Moses to the High Priests to our Pope and Bishops, God has always guided His people through chosen men. Church and God are the same single master. Separating them is disaster for us.

But, do I have to follow everything I hear in Church? There are some non-doctrinal things that are good pious practices but are not essential. For example: we are not required to accept the reality of apparitions of Mary, even when the Church declares them worthy of belief. God's, "must believe," revelation ended with the death of the apostles. Private revelations can never add anything new to Catholic doctrine even were they to come to the Pope. They can only be reminders of what is already there.

However, God's public revelation through Jesus cannot be rejected without serious sin. This deposit of faith is alive in the memory of the living Body of Christ made visible in our Holy Catholic Church. We are the only Church with a direct historical link to the apostles of Jesus. What a happy thing it is to be able to say, "I choose to believe all my Catholic Church teaches, even the things I don't know much about, because I trust Jesus alive in His own holy Church. It is His idea. Amen."