



# Knowledge of Truth

Faith and reason guide us.

The world created by God has its own design, its limitations and boundaries. This implies that the world and human beings are made with certain truths. Who we are and how we are meant to exist in this world are given to us in our creation by a loving God. Our Fall from the Garden of Eden happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and tried to claim for themselves the power to determine what was good and evil, the power to make their own truths.

So, how do we know what is true?  
How do we know what to do?

From a Catholic perspective, truth is not something we invent. It is something we receive from God, discover through reason, and share with others. Truth corresponds to reality as it truly is, and its ultimate source is God, who is Truth itself (John 14:6). When people claim that everyone can have their own truth, there is no longer a shared foundation for right and wrong.

A culture cannot long endure if it cannot speak about shared truths. As recent history shows, when people stop talking about what is actually true, disagreement turns into division and violence.

The Catholic Church teaches that truth is objective. It is fair to say that truth, once it is known with certainty, has a reality which is not dependent on opinions, feelings or

cultural context. Truth is also unchanging, though our understanding of it grows and our application of truth in any given circumstance may change over time. Some truths—like the existence of God, the dignity of every human person, and the Resurrection of Christ—are known with certainty because they are revealed by God or can be reasoned to by our intellect.

Other truths, such as how best to apply moral principles in politics or science, require prudence and discussion. For example, the truth that all human life is sacred is absolute, but the ways we protect and honor that dignity can develop as we learn and reason together.

Reasoning together acknowledges that we can receive, discover and share truth.

Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that our human knowledge is limited but capable of growth. We come to understand truth gradually, certainly through revelation from God, but also through experience, reason, and reflection. This applies not only to faith but also to our understanding of culture, ethics, politics, etc.

Freedom flows from knowledge so that true freedom is not the ability to make up our own version of reality. It is the power to live according to what is true and good. Real freedom means aligning our

choices with the truth about who we are and who God is. When freedom is separated from truth, it becomes mere self-will—doing whatever one pleases even when it harms oneself or others. Authentic freedom is found in living the truth that sets us free (John 8:32).

Jesus told His disciples that He would give them the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit would lead them to an understanding of truth. Prayer, and particularly prayers for enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, is essential to coming to know the truth, to understand it, and give it application in our shared lives.

By holding together confidence that truth exists and humility about our limited understanding of it, the Catholic faith avoids both moral relativism and rigid inflexibility. Instead, it offers a balanced and life-giving path toward real freedom, unity, and human flourishing.

By Father David Olson



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