

## A Sermon on the Word Catholic

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for October 9th, 2022 (and beyond)

My own heritage is Irish, Italian, Black/African, Cherokee, Creek, Dutch, French, and British. In terms of church or religious services, I've attended synagogue, Lutheran churches, Gospel Churches, Methodist churches, Baptist churches, Pentecostal church, Jehovah's Witness meetings, volunteered for Episcopalian churches, performed Vespers at Catholic church where my secular high school choir teacher attended as well as at a Catholic university, mosques, some Eastern temples, and a few new age or alternative things as well. I've also worked with Quakers/the Friends Church at times. I double-majored in history and philosophy at the University of Washington and was ordained by the Universal Life Church in 2001 after which I started my own independent mission and church. As part of COPE Ministries' services, we help bring to justice frauds, human traffickers, and rapists regardless of storefront or cultural influences. And, sometimes the call does come from within the house.

Whether the Order Of Malta of the Catholic Church or any branch of it is nothing but an oligarch-run "Death Star" (Star Wars reference) that has been fancifully and fantastically mythologized through all the arts, including the film industry, or the actual "Big Club" George Carlin referenced in his comedy routines at times is certainly worth a ponder or two. I can honestly say that my ancestors have held unfavorable positions regarding the Catholic Church and some are Catholic still today. But, all my family members to my knowledge strongly dislike and/or actually hate people who rape and traffick people (particularly children). I agree with their position and Antonin Scalia's joining in Justice Samuel Alito's dissenting opinion in this case: *KENNEDY v. LOUISIANA* (No. 07-343) 957 So. 2d 757. Scalia was reportedly a Knight of Malta. I credited him and not Alito with the dissent previously, but it was Justice Alito's dissent which Scalia joined in dissenting the decision to outlaw as unconstitutional the death penalty for those convicted of raping children. I personally support the death penalty in such cases where they've been proved beyond a reasonable doubt. But, the word Catholic is one I'd like defined. I know Lutherans are followers of Martin Luther and so on.

Oxford Languages via Google defines "Catholic" as "including a wide variety of things; all-embracing", "of the Roman Catholic faith", and "late Middle English: from Old French *catholique* or late Latin *catholicus*, from Greek *katholikos* 'universal', from *kata* 'in respect of' + *holos* 'whole'." Dictionary.com defines "Catholic" as "broad or wide-ranging in tastes, interests, or the like; having sympathies with all; broad-minded; liberal", "universal in extent; involving all; of interest to all," and "pertaining to the whole Christian body or church".

Now, what I get out of the above definitions is that Catholicism is for those who believe variety is the spice of life and that the world takes all kinds while rejecting the notion of "to each their own" because Catholicism believes it is universal and for everyone even to the extent it provides sanctuary and absolution for the most despicable criminals in the world. Catholicism is allowed to believe that, but needs to stop the Machiavellian/Order of Malta shit which it can't without losing funding. I reject frauds, rapists, and human

traffickers and would never provide them sanctuary nor offer them absolution, only justice with respect for due process. I believe in individual rights and equal rights under the law. And, I believe freedom and sanctuary are for people who believe in and practice good faith regardless of storefront or cultural influences and that prison and supervision is for people who believe in and practice bad faith in a manner identifiable as a violation of laws in the jurisdiction where said bad faith is being practiced. Good faith requires honesty and informed consent, disclosures not just disclaimers. And, bad faith is being dishonest for vicious reasons such as to cover up crimes or commit fraud.

I also believe if you welcome the nastiest people who have nowhere else to go and/or buy their access to victims, because they are that evil, in hopes you can inspire them to change, you are delusional and unaware that malignant narcissists manipulate and will soothsay to gain access to more victims who trust you to protect them from harm while you just invite the malignant narcissists in and hand them positions of seeming authority that destroy any reasonable basis to continue to trust you and/or your storefront. So, you are rationalizing the whoredom you facilitate rather than actually being flawless/infallible as claimed particularly regarding the papacy. But, if the church itself holds all positions at once, it is always holding the right one even if not only that. And, does it only have power if you believe it?

With Free Market Capitalism, you can donate to charities (including churches) or pay taxes or do both. The Bill of Rights in the US Constitution recognizes our individual rights to peaceably assemble and associate with others as well as to be left alone. Everyone has those rights and it is our individual choices how we exercise them individually and/or collectively. No one is above the law and everyone who commits crime has the same chance at being convicted, which depends primarily on timely reporting and sufficient evidence for conviction beyond a reasonable doubt. Only those contemplating crime can prevent it by not committing crimes even though they thought about it. And, expecting or demanding a perfect world where no crime is ever committed is insane and extremely delusional, also impracticable. The best we can all do is report crimes to the proper law enforcement bodies and be civilized and patient enough to respect the requirements of due process for the sake of not unjustly depriving anyone of their life, liberty, or property.

I also believe the Catholic Church isn't where to report rapes committed by clergy and that such crimes need to be reported to law enforcement. So, where in-house reporting of crimes committed by clergy is how families or victims handled it, the church has limited authority and could only dismiss, reprimand, forgive/absolve, relocate, or excommunicate the accused. It is important to remember the accused in such a case was not convicted beyond a reasonable doubt nor given due process at law. So, when a sin is a crime, crime has to be reported to law enforcement in the jurisdiction where the crime occurred and not to the church if justice is to be served. A church that gives everyone the benefit of the doubt in regards to being of and acting in good faith, that also has no power to enforce laws nor penalize transgressions beyond the limited authority related to their own organizational policies and procedures above, really isn't to blame unless a direct witness of a crime where they need to report it. Reporting a third-party report of any

criminal activity is seen as hearsay and inadmissible in most cases. It is frustrating to hear of such evil while feeling somewhat powerless to do anything but pray and recommend people do the right thing and report it to law enforcement.

I blame criminals for their crimes and not bystanders for lacking omniscience. I'm also reasonable enough to not expect or believe anyone is omniscient, not even the Pope. I love my family, including those that are Catholic. So, my criticism of any general assembly is never hate even if I hate something specific that falls under the general header. For me, transparency, admitting fallibility, accepting responsibility for own failures or faults with willingness to self-correct or be corrected, and for the sake of equality reporting crimes to actual law enforcement are all ways the Catholic Church can be more proactive in cleaning itself up. And, if it slowly fades away and this power-play by the Order of Malta is just the last death-throes of the church or an extremist sect of it that the church refers to as a "lay Catholic order", not official, then maybe some peace will come of it where the Order of Malta was behind the torture of indigenous people everywhere at boarding schools after the adults were tortured, killed, and/or enslaved. I think dissolving anything with a history of causing that much suffering will be cathartic for everyone. Dissolving Order of Malta leadership is a start, and Pope Francis did that this year.

Meditative Questions:

Are you now or have you ever been angry with the Catholic Church?

Are you less angry, as angry, or more angry with it after the above sermon?

Do you feel the definition of "Catholic" helps you understand the Catholic Church better?

Do you think allegations of criminal activity should be enough to destroy someone's life even if there is insufficient evidence for a conviction beyond a reasonable doubt? If so, what if the allegations were about you?

Do you understand and accept that due process is necessary to serve justice? Do you understand the victim's role in that process is to report it to the proper authorities as swiftly as possible while evidence is still fresh and perpetrators can still be reasonably apprehended?

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>