

## The Early Modern European Catechism

1. **Gentlemen, what are you?**

I am a king, for I rule myself.

2. **Ladies, what are you?**

I am a queen, for I rule myself.

3. **What does it mean to rule yourself?**

I am free to do good; I am not the slave of my desires.

4. **Who has made you kings and queens?**

“Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”

5. **What is the bondage to decay?**

The seven vices are Pride, Avarice, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger, Sloth.

6. **How should a man live?**

The seven virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, Faith, Hope, Love.

7. **What does God do in man?**

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control.

8. **What is temptation and what is virtue?**

“I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad—as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; stringent are they; inviolate they shall be. If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth? They have a worth—so I have always believed; and if I cannot believe it now, it is because I am insane—quite insane: with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs. Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot.”

**9. What is human society?**

According to Edmund Burke, Society “is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primaevial contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place.”

**10. What are the defining features of the Modern Era?**

“Modernity aims to achieve its goals by erecting walls and boundaries that will keep the world neatly divided and under control. The wall of separation between religion and politics will save politics from irrational passion. For moderns, distinguishing ‘us’ from ‘them’ is thus both temporal and spatial: temporal because it distinguishes sharply between the present and the past, spatial because it distinguishes sharply between those who are up to date and those who are mired in a past that moderns have transcended. We moderns organize ourselves into rationally constituted nations; they are organized by irrational blood-bound tribes. We recognize the difference between religion and politics; they confuse the two. We separate fine arts from daily life; with them arts and life are commingled. We believe in equality and freedom; their lives are dominated by hierarchy and slavery. We are rational; they are irrational. Above all, the modern theory of progress rests on the notion that we know nature as it truly is and thus have the ability to control nature in the ways they never imagined.”

**11. What is the Enlightened ethos?**

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s own understanding without another’s guidance. This immaturity is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one’s own mind without another’s guidance. *Dare to know!* ‘Have the courage to use your own understanding,’ is therefore the motto of the Enlightenment.”

**12. What is the conservative ethos?**

“Conservatism starts from a sentiment that good things are easily destroyed, but not easily created. This is especially true of the good things that come to us as collective assets: peace, freedom, law, civility, public spirit, the security of property and family life, in all of which we depend on the cooperation of others while having no means singlehandedly to obtain it. In respect of such things, the work of destruction is quick, easy and exhilarating; the work of creation slow, laborious and dull.”

**The Modern Timeline**

The Modern Era: 1440 through 1914

1440: Johannes Gutenberg invents the printing press

1453: Byzantium falls to the Ottoman Turks; Eastern intellectuals move West

1521–1618: The Reformation

1521: Luther defends his works at the Diet of Worms; the Reformation begins

1543–1689: The Scientific Revolution

1555: Charles V agrees to the Peace of Augsburg; “*Cuius regio, eius religio*”: the religion of the ruler becomes the religion of the ruled

1618–1689: The Baroque Era

1618–1648: The Thirty Years’ War, which begins religious and ends political: Christendom is shattered

1649: The Regicide

1689–1789: The Enlightenment

1689: Sir Isaac Newton publishes *Principia Mathematica*; the clock becomes the organizing principle of society

1756 through 1763: The Seven Years’ War; European wars become global events

1789–1815: The French Revolution

1789: The French Revolution, in which French republicans embrace Rousseau’s philosophy and the American precedent

1799: Napoleon Bonaparte takes control of the Revolution as Enlightened despot and Romantic hero

1815–1871: The age of national unifications

1815: Napoleon is defeated; Europe seeks balance

1848: A wave of democratic revolutions is suppressed in Europe

1914: The First World War shatters the Enlightenment myth of perpetual progress; the post-Modern world is born