



We live in an age where everything seems negotiable: truth, morality, even human identity itself. In this context, a classic affirmation from the Catholic tradition resounds with force—but also with discomfort: **“error has no rights.”**

At first glance, it may seem like a harsh statement, even incompatible with modern sensibilities. How can the Church, which preaches love and mercy, uphold something like this? Does it not contradict religious freedom or the dignity of the human person?

However, when properly understood, this affirmation is not only deeply coherent with the Gospel, but also a luminous guide for living with truth, charity, and firmness amid today’s relativism.

This article seeks to help you understand this idea from its theological roots—especially in the thought of Saint Augustine—its development in the Church’s tradition, and above all, its concrete application in your daily life.

1. What Does “Error Has No Rights” Really Mean?

The first thing we must clarify is that **the Church has never taught that people who are in error lack dignity or rights.**

Here lies the key:

- **The person always has dignity and rights** (because they are created in the image of God).
- **Error itself does not have the right to be promoted or considered as truth.**

This is a fundamental distinction.

In other words:

□ **Love the one who is mistaken, but do not legitimize the error.**

This rests on a basic conviction of Christianity:

truth is not just another opinion, but an objective reality that comes from God.



2. Roots in the Thought of Saint Augustine

Saint Augustine, one of the great Fathers of the Church, developed this idea deeply in his struggle against the heresies of his time.

He himself had lived in error—especially in Manichaeism—before his conversion. For this reason, he spoke from experience.

One of his most well-known phrases perfectly captures this tension:

| *“Love the sinner, but hate the sin.”*

For Saint Augustine:

- Error is a **privation of truth**.
- It has no proper substance, just as darkness has none in comparison to light.
- Therefore, it cannot claim legitimacy.

In his thought, allowing error to spread without correction is not an act of love, but of abandonment.

Because if truth saves, **leaving someone in error is leaving them far from salvation.**

3. Biblical Foundation: The Truth Sets Free

The Gospel is radically clear on this point. Christ does not present Himself as one option among many, but as **Truth itself**:



| *“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)*

And also:

| *“The truth will set you free” (John 8:32)*

This implies something decisive:

- **Error does not liberate; it enslaves.**
- **Falsehood cannot have rights, because it destroys the human person.**

For this reason, Christianity cannot fall into relativism without betraying itself.

4. Development in the Tradition of the Church

Throughout the centuries, the Church has upheld this teaching, with important nuances.

Especially in modern times, it has deepened the relationship between:

- **Truth**
- **Freedom**
- **Conscience**

The key point is this:

- Religious freedom does not mean that all religions are equally true.
- It means that no one should be forced to believe.

Thus, the Church simultaneously affirms:

- That **truth is unique and objective.**



- And that **the person must adhere to it freely**.

This harmonizes perfectly with the idea that error has no rights in itself, while the person does have the right not to be coerced.

5. An Uncomfortable Truth in Today’s World

Today we live in a culture where it is constantly repeated:

- “Everyone has their own truth”
- “Everything is relative”
- “The important thing is not to judge”

But this mindset has serious consequences:

- The notion of good and evil becomes blurred
- Destructive behaviors are legitimized
- The sense of sin is lost

In this context, affirming that **error has no rights** becomes almost a countercultural act.

But it is also a deeply charitable act.

Because it implies believing that:

- ☐ **Truth exists**
 - ☐ **Truth is good**
 - ☐ **And truth saves**
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6. Practical Applications: Living This Truth Today

This is where everything becomes concrete. How can we live this teaching without falling into harsh judgment or intolerance?

1. Love Without Relativizing

You can—and must—love everyone:

- Family
- Friends
- Colleagues

But loving does not mean approving everything.

- To love is to desire the good of the other.
 - And the good of the other passes through truth.
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2. Form Your Conscience

You cannot defend the truth if you do not know it.

This implies:

- Reading Sacred Scripture
- Knowing the Catechism
- Forming yourself doctrinally

In a world of confusion, **ignorance is not neutral: it is dangerous.**



3. Correct with Charity

Saint Augustine insisted that correction must be done from love, not from pride.

This means:

- Not humiliating
- Not imposing
- Not arguing out of ego

But rather:

- Speaking the truth when necessary
 - Not remaining silent out of cowardice
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4. Avoid Complicit Silence

Today there is great social pressure to remain silent.

But the Christian cannot be indifferent to error, especially when it:

- Destroys lives
- Confuses others
- Is presented as good

Silence, in these cases, is not prudence—it is abandonment.

5. Live Coherently

The best defense of truth is not a speech, but a life.

When someone sees:

- Your peace
- Your coherence



- Your charity

Then truth becomes credible.

7. The Christian Balance: Truth and Mercy

Here lies the most delicate—and most beautiful—point.

Christ never separated:

- Truth
- From mercy

To the adulterous woman He says:

| *“Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11)*

He does not condemn her...
but neither does He justify the sin.

This is the Christian model:

- ☐ **To welcome without approving error**
 - ☐ **To correct without destroying the person**
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8. A Personal Call: What Do You Do with



the Truth?

This topic is not merely theoretical. It is deeply personal.

Each of us must ask:

- Do I seek the truth or settle for comfort?
- Do I remain silent out of fear?
- Do I confuse love with permissiveness?

Because in the end, the question is not only whether error has rights...

□ but whether **truth has a place in your life.**

Conclusion: Truth Does Not Oppress—It Liberates

To say that “error has no rights” is not a statement of intolerance, but an affirmation of hope.

Because it means:

- We are not condemned to chaos
- Not everything is relative
- There is a true path

And that path has a face:

Christ

In a world that often prefers the comfort of falsehood, the Christian is called to something greater:

□ **To live in the truth, proclaim it with love, and defend it with courage.**

Because only the truth—even when it is uncomfortable—



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is capable of saving.