

Our July 2025 Recommendation: *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis:

C.S. Lewis never converted to Catholicism, but *The Screwtape Letters* might be the most unintentionally Catholic thing he ever wrote. Imagine the Devil advising a junior tempter on how to ruin a soul—that’s the premise. But what’s brilliant isn’t just the idea. It’s how Lewis unearths the spiritual landmines hiding in ordinary life: the petty habits, rationalizations, and half-truths. His fictional senior demon Screwtape writes with venomous wit and terrifying insight.

But this isn’t a theology textbook. It’s a mirror held up to your soul, and more often than not, the reflection isn’t flattering. Here are ten punch-in-the-gut lessons that Catholics should take seriously—each tethered to the Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], because Lewis’s brilliance often dances along the edges of Catholic truth, even when he doesn’t mean to.

1. Distraction is the Devil’s Oxygen: Lewis shows that it’s not spectacular sins, but endless distractions that damn souls. News flashes, scrolling, trivial worries — all drown out God’s voice [CCC 2725]. *If you’re too busy to pray, you’re too busy to be saved.*

2. Pride is the Devil’s Pet Vice: Whether it’s thinking you’re holier than your pew neighbor or wiser than your priest, Screwtape loves puffed-up Christians. The Catechism warns that pride is the beginning of all sin [CCC 1866]. *Pride doesn’t smell like sulfur; it smells like sanctimony.*

3. The Church’s Warts Are Part of the Battle: Screwtape delights when Christians focus on the flaws of fellow believers instead of the beauty of Christ’s Body. The Church is holy because of Christ, not because of us [CCC 823-829]. *If you look for a perfect Church, you’ll join none and help none.*

4. The Present Moment is Where Heaven Touches Earth: Lewis hammers this home: grace is available now, not yesterday, not tomorrow. The Catechism agrees: it’s in the present that we respond to God’s call [CCC 2659-2660]. *Heaven is reached by stepping faithfully through today’s door.*

5. Shallow “Religiosity” is Worse than Open Rebellion: A faith mixed with politics, trendiness, or shallow causes is spiritual poison. Lewis knew it; the Catechism warns against false ideologies corrupting true faith [CCC 675-677]. *The devil doesn’t mind a Christian, as long as he’s a hollow one.*

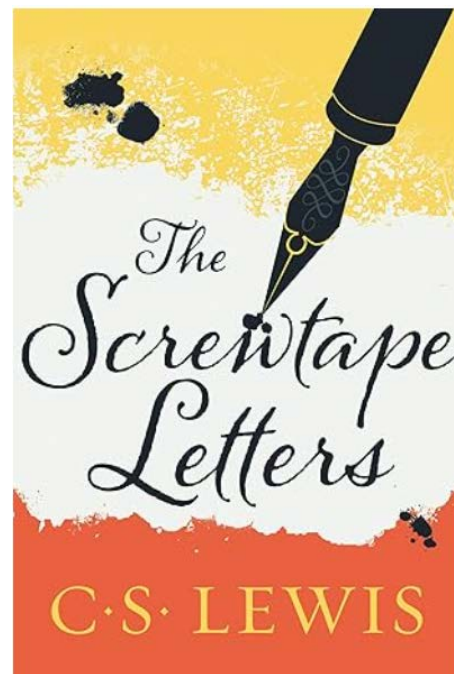
6. Sin Grows Best in the Soil of the Small and Mundane: Forget dramatic temptations. It’s the quiet compromises — impatience, self-pity, indulgence — that rot the soul [CCC 1863]. *It’s not one big “No” to God that damns most souls. It’s a thousand whispered “maybe laters.”*

7. Pleasure Itself is Not the Enemy: Screwtape hates genuine joy because real pleasures—music, laughter, love—reflect Heaven’s goodness. The Catechism reminds us that God made creation good [CCC 299]. *The devil can only twist what God first called good.*

8. True Prayer is Dangerous to Hell: Screwtape trembles when humans pray honestly and humbly. Authentic prayer unites the soul to God [CCC 2559]. *The weakest whisper to God shatters the proudest roar of Hell.*

9. Real Love is War Against Hell: A Christian marriage built on sacrifice, patience, and forgiveness becomes radioactive to demons. The Catechism calls marriage a sacrament, a fortress of grace [CCC 1601-1605]. *Every faithful marriage is a siege tower battering Hell’s gates.*

10. Death is Either Victory or Defeat: In the end, Screwtape rages when a soul dies in friendship with God — because death is not the end, but the beginning [CCC 1020]. *To die well is to cheat the devil of his prize.*



So, why should Catholics read *The Screwtape Letters*? Because it disarms you. It speaks the devil’s playbook out loud—and forces you to admit how often you’ve fallen for it. Lewis turns the spiritual life inside out and lets you listen in on Hell’s strategy meeting. The prose crackles, the insights sting, and you come away with a clearer view of your own soul. You won’t find formal theology or perfect doctrine here. But you *will* find truth cloaked in satire and a powerful call to vigilance. In a time when sin is marketed, distraction reigns, and comfort becomes a creed, *The Screwtape Letters* hits harder than ever. Just don’t read it too late at night—you might hear Wormwood whispering.

[Recommended: Paul Harvey[1965]: “If I Were the Devil”: <https://youtu.be/jnPE8u5ONls?feature=shared>]