

## AUTHORITY VS. AUTHORITARIANISM

What is authority? Some say that the Church speaks and acts with authority. Others say that the Church is authoritarian. Who is right?

With any subject or object, we can better recognize it by its characteristics. Here are some of the characteristics of authority and authoritarianism.

### Characteristics of Authority

Helps to build  
Love that is without pretense  
Means to increase (augere)  
Source of nourishment for generative and creative nature  
Understands the need for correction, discipline and sensible order  
Is integrated with a fine and balance sense of what contributes to the common good  
Is implemented in a spontaneous manner  
Reveals itself in genuine appreciation of human personality  
Respects individuality  
  
Personal readiness to make personal sacrifices for the good of the other  
  
Humanizes persons  
  
Trusts in order to be trustworthy  
  
Promotes insight and enhancement  
  
Brings more of other people into being  
  
Leaves realistic room and freedom for growth

### Characteristics of Authoritarianism

Manifested in efficiency and control  
Urge to control and supervise strictly  
Diminishes the lives of others  
Not interested in the good of others  
  
Self-gratification from imposing their will on others  
Bases itself on fear  
  
Is not interested in surrendering control  
Leaves no room for trust  
  
Depends on depriving its subjects of their senses  
Refuses to let subjects see, hear, or inspect the trustworthy internal surroundings that healthy people regularly experience  
Essentially ordered to the preservation and expansion of power  
Closes people off from themselves and from others  
Mocks genuine authority in its willingness to use power against vulnerable persons  
Seeks conformity rather than free commitment  
Employs psychological devices to compel or monitor behavior  
Manipulates people  
Debases and diminishes others in order to gratify the pathological needs of those who exercise it  
Substitutes the manipulation of people for the healthy expression they fear and avoid.