

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

What Body Of Laws Governs The Church?

Know This...

Faithful and unfaithful clergy, religious, and laity embody the Church. Our attitudes and actions can reflect positively or negatively on Her. The Code of Canon Law governs the Church and guides the attitudes, decisions, and actions of Her faithful. Canon Law ensures the rights of the baptized to the sacraments, sacred worship, appropriate and informed leadership, and judicial decisions and review.



James: Democracies and kingdoms are guided by laws. Laws are rules, commands, and edicts legislated and issued by those in authority.



John: God is the ultimate source of law. His natural law is written in every human heart. Through Moses, God made His laws known to the Israelites.

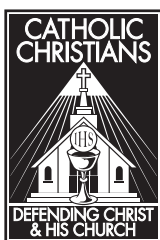
James: Jesus gave voice and clarity to the fullness of God's laws in the oral and written Word of Apostolic Tradition. Canon Law reflects and articulates Apostolic Tradition.

John: Canon Law identifies the duties and rights of the baptized, addresses the roles and responsibilities of the clergy, and brings order to Christian life and society.

James: Canon Law does not restrict our freedom but ensures true freedom within the boundaries of Jesus' Church.

Deacon John Beckmann and Deacon James Russell are permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

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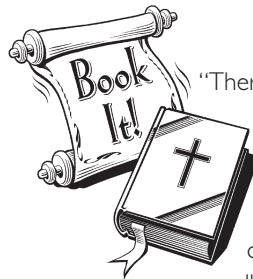


Philip told Nathanael, "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law, and also the prophets, Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth." ^{Jn 1:45} In the Gospels, Jesus condemns the sin of scandal, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and fidelity. But these you should have done, without neglecting the others." ^{Mt 23: 23} "Woe to the world because of things that cause sin! Such things must come, but woe to the one through whom they come!" ^{Mt 18:7} Like Jesus, Canon Law speaks against the sin of scandal.



"Canon Law consists of the rules (canons or laws) which provide the norms for good order in the visible society of the Church. Those canon laws that apply universally are contained in the Codes of Canon Law." ^{ccc glossary}

"This Church, constituted and organized in this world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him." ^{Canon 204§2} "Those baptized are fully in the communion of the Catholic Church on this earth who are joined with Christ in its visible structure by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance." ^{Canon 205} "The Christian faithful have the right to receive assistance from the sacred pastors out of the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the word of God and the sacraments." ^{Canon 213}



"There is no partiality with God. All who sin outside the law will also perish without reference to it, and all who sin under the law will be judged in accordance with it. For it is not those who hear the law who are just in the sight of God; rather, those who observe the law will be justified." ^{Rom 2:11-13} "You were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" ^{Gal 5:14} "If you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law, but falls short in one particular, has become guilty in respect to all of it." ^{Jas 2:8-10}

Lord Jesus, You did not abolish the Law but fulfilled it. The Apostles and early evangelists articulated and documented Your teaching. The Magisterium expresses and promotes Your teaching in written laws meant to guide and instruct the faithful in all aspects of their Christian lives. Send forth Your Spirit that I might continue to ponder Your law in my heart; that it might move me to produce works pleasing to You; and that I might remain obedient to the Magisterium. I ask this in Your Holy Name. Amen.

