



Chapter 5

Christian Life: Law and Morality



A young man once asked Jesus "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus' answer consisted of one question, two instructions and one promise. What were they?

- You know the commandments?
- Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor (Lk 18:22)
- Then come, follow me
- You will have treasure in heaven

Here Jesus indicates the laws to be obeyed in Christian life, the lifestyle to be embraced, and the consequent spiritual life that we receive. Breaking laws not only causes misery for ourselves but also affects others.



What are your thoughts on the causes of such accidents?



Lk18:18-23



Who are all affected by one person's violation of law?



Write the message conveyed by the example.

Life is a journey for each one of us; we should be aware of the dangers that may occur there and the precautions we take to overcome them. Rules are the guiding lights in our journey towards the goal.

What are Laws / Why the Laws?

Many may not be interested in following the laws. Not only do they dislike them but also feel that they are often unnecessary. How many questions cross our mind when we talk about the law? Some questions have been added to the right side of the page. You may have many other questions. Keeping them in mind, read the following section carefully.

- Laws are the rules implemented by the responsible authorities with the objective of protecting the public interest.
- Morality, the voice of God to do good and forsake evil, is the foundation of laws.
- The basis of law is respect for humanity and human dignity. The reason for human dignity is that God's Spirit resides in human beings.
- Laws are also the criteria for distinguishing right and wrong; the divine voice of morality can be recognised and acquired through reason.
- Pope Leo XIII teaches that the admonition of reason is law. We are obliged to obey the moral law that prompts us to love God and humans and fulfil our responsibilities with freedom.
- There are laws that God has directly given us, as well as laws that humans have created for the common good.
- Laws should be made in a manner that is consistent with reason and justice.



1. Doesn't the law affect the liberty of the individual?
2. Why should I obey the rules?
3. Who makes the laws?
4. What's wrong with doing what I love?

- Authority is a distinct quality that motivates individuals or institutions to establish rules [laws] for social conduct, demanding obedience from the people. It is the duty of authorities to safeguard the public interest.
- Functions of law are setting goals, ensuring safety, defining responsibilities and duties, and educating.
- Individuals obey or disobey laws based on their own decisions, as humans possess freedom.
- Freedom is defined as the ability to act or not to act and to consciously choose one's actions. When oriented towards the supreme goodness, which is God, freedom manifests itself through good deeds.
- Freedom should be considered as a service to establish conditions of goodness and justice.

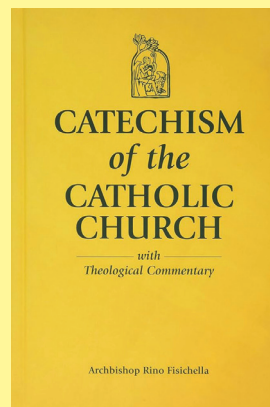
(CCC 1731, 1733)

Disobedience, the choice of evil, and the temptation to find good in evil are all misuse of freedom. Everyone wants to live happily. But one thing must be remembered, **my joy should not be someone else's sorrow, so we must be able to avoid being influenced by Satan and abusing our freedom. Because we are responsible for the actions we do with our direct decision. Jesus, who overcame temptation, is our role model in this regard.**

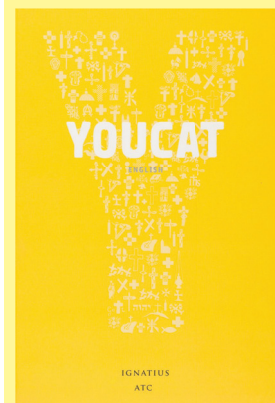
Illuminated Levels of Moral Laws

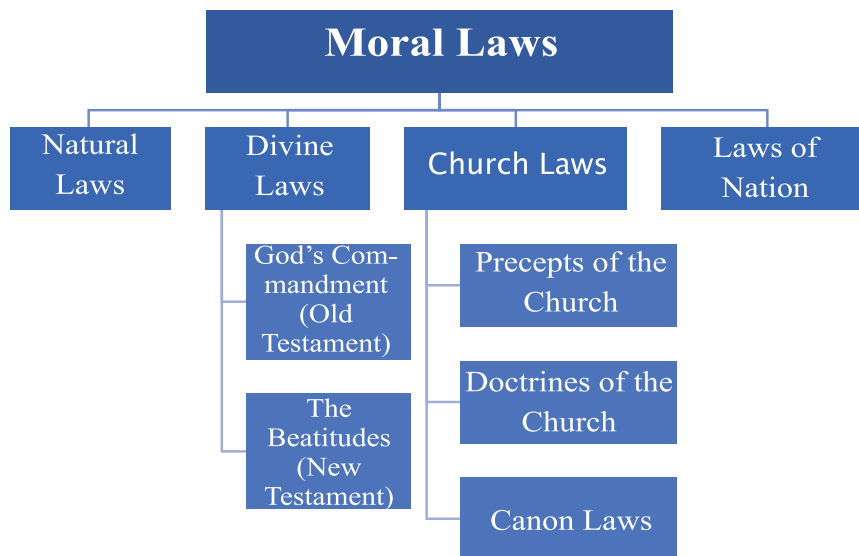
The fulfilment of the moral law is in Jesus. Jesus is a person who fulfilled his responsibilities perfectly by standing together in love for God and man (Mt 5:17).

The moral law is revealed in different ways in human life. At home, at school, in the Church and in public places, we must follow the moral laws that are revealed in different ways. The illustrated forms of ethical rules and their characteristics can be understood by looking at the flowchart below.



What is freedom? What are the duties of the authorities?
Check YOUCAT
288,326 questions and find the answer.





We should know ‘what and why’ regarding each one of the Moral Laws. The principle ‘ignorance of law is no excuse’ applies in this regard also.

1. Natural Laws (CCC 1954,1958)

1. It originates from the primordial moral consciousness which enables man to discern good and evil, truth and falsehood, with the help of reason.
2. The basis of this is loyalty to God and the conviction that all human beings are equal. It applies to everyone and is equally binding.
3. Remains unchanging and stable despite the change of history.
4. They may be denied, but they remain permanently inscribed within the depths of every individual's soul, incapable of being destroyed or removed. (Examples: Loving and caring for children, respecting and honouring parents and elders, saving lives etc.)
5. By partaking in the wisdom and goodness of God, the Creator, we gain the ability to control ourselves through natural laws. For example, Honour your father and mother.

Divine Laws

It is divided into Old Testament (God’s Commandments) and New Testament (Gospel Law).



Enlist and Categorise the following

- Protection of Children
- No idolatry
- Don't destroy life
- No marriage between siblings
- Taxes must be paid
- Suffering must be undertaken for justice
- Suicide is a sin
- Act with compassion

Old Testament	New Testament
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The moral principles of the Old Testament are summarized in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17) • God's commandments are the light given to us to recognize God's calling and ways to save us from evil • They forbid actions contrary to love for God and man • This is the first phase of the written law which clarifies our duties and responsibilities • It deals with relation to God, parents and human society • God's love and fraternal love are the core of God's commandments • The purpose of God's commandments is to lead us to the new covenant completed in Jesus and to the kingdom of heaven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the fulfilment of the Old Testament and revealed through the teachings and actions of the Messiah • Grants us the divine virtues and fills us with the grace of the Holy Spirit • Gives hope to the poor, the afflicted, the humble, the pure in heart, and the righteous • We are called to seek God through the Christian practices of prayer, charity, and fasting • The Golden Rule is "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you" (Mt 7:12) • This is known as Law of Love (Jn 15:12), Law of Grace (Rom 5:4), Law of Freedom (Rom 3:31) • The Gospel law is the values that help us to grow in the love and goodness of Jesus

3. Church Laws

The Church is the continuation of the Messiah. Therefore, we have a duty to obey the laws of the Church and the teachings of the Church authorities.

- The decrees of the Holy Church, the exhortations of the Church, and the Canon Laws are all ecclesiastical laws.

Theological Virtues

Faith
Hope
Love

Byheart

- Ten Commandments
- Precepts of the Church
- Important Religious Virtues
- Theological Virtues
- The Beatitudes

Five Precepts of the Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The precepts of the Church are made by the authorities who are pastors and successors of the Messiah. It originates from the magisterium of the Church. • The commandments are in the context of religious and moral life.
Church Doctrines and Encyclicals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pope, who has Petrine authority, and the bishops who are in magisterial communion with him, have the authority of the magisterium of the Church. • Encyclicals and exhortations are instructions from the Church teaching its members about faith, morals and rituals. • We are obliged to follow the teachings of the Church authorities.
Canon Laws
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church led by the Holy Spirit always works through human systems. • Canon Laws are rules for coordinating and regulating church activities. • The Pope is the authority on Canon Laws. The Latin Church and the Eastern Churches have separate Canon Laws. • The Synod of Bishops has the authority to make laws for the Eastern Churches in the light of Canon Law. • We are obliged to follow the Church laws which are based on the Canon Laws.

4. Laws of Nation

- These are the restrictions imposed by the authorities on the character, conduct, freedom of action, rights etc. of the individuals of a nation.
- The objective of the laws of the nation is to ensure a peaceful, orderly, and sustainable civil society and thereby protecting human rights.



Ex 20:1-17
Mt Chapters 5-7

Magisterium

The Magisterium is the authority of the Church to interpret and teach the deposits of faith, passed down from Jesus through the Apostles (CCC 2034).



What are the ways in which moral laws are revealed?

- Allegiance, collective responsibility, suffrage, national security are the rights and duties of the citizen.
- The laws of the nation should not contradict natural laws, moral laws and divine laws and if so, man is not obligated to obey such laws.

Emotions and Moral Life

When Do Emotions Become Sin?

Emotions are natural elements of the human mind, Jesus pointed out that the human heart is the source of emotions (Mk 7:21). There are both negative and positive emotions. The most fundamental emotion is love, which arises from the attraction to goodness. Emotions stem from the desire for goodness, leading us to enjoy the acquired good and thereby live in happiness. In themselves passions are neither good nor evil. When man controls them reasonably, it leads to a good moral life. "Passions are morally good when they contribute to a good action, evil in the opposite case. Emotions and feelings can be taken up into the virtues or perverted by the vices" (CCC 1767, 1768) and emotions become sinful if perverted.

Ethics of Human Actions

For an act to be considered moral, all three elements - the subject, the intention and the circumstance - must be good.

Case study

A man offers a lift to an elderly woman whom he knows and who has difficulty walking. Later, he steals money from her house with the intention of using it to help other deserving patients as part of a prearranged plan. Is the action of this person morally justified or morally wrong?

Subject: The subject is to what goodness the mind consciously directs. (In this case study, it's about assisting the elderly or sick.)

Intention: It centers on the person doing the work and the mind's movement towards the goal. There

Passions "are evil if love is evil and good if it is good"

St. Augustine
(CCC 1766).



Is there a problem in paying bribes to get things done faster?



Is it right to pass the exam by copying?

should be no evil in this (In the above case study, the man helped the old lady with the intention of stealing money).

Circumstance: Circumstance is the environment or reason for doing the act. Circumstances cannot turn evil into good. But circumstances can increase or decrease good or evil. (The situation is to help the poor patients who had difficulty in walking). Neither intention nor circumstance can make an evil act good. **The question is whether evil can be done for the sake of good. The answer is No, Never. A deed becomes good only when the means and the end are good.**

In the example mentioned earlier, the motive was theft. It is evil. Therefore, his whole act is immoral and he is guilty. Remember, all evil comes before us wrapped in goodness. Don't be attracted to it.

Virtuous Life

St. Paul says, "...beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil 4:8). A virtuous life is the only way to avoid falling into sin.

- Virtues are the habit of doing good. The basic virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, courage and temperance. These virtues lead us to goodness.

Prudence

Practical intelligence to recognize the true goodness and choose the right way to achieve it

Justice

The assurance and will to give one's due

Fortitude

Consistency and determination to pursue goodness



What is wrong in robbing the rich and helping the poor?



When does an action become moral?



What position would you take if there was a national law requiring euthanasia for people over 80 to reduce the aging population? What is your reasoning?



'Sin is the violation of the commandments.' So, do you think the existence of commandments is the reason for sins?

Temperance

Moderating the attraction of pleasures
and balancing it in use.

- Virtues help us to enjoy the good that one has acquired and thereby live happily.
- Pride, greed, envy, anger, hesitation, obsession and laziness within us are capital sins because they produce other sins.

Emotions governed by capital sins act as evil and emotions governed by original virtues act as good. So, emotions and feelings must be guided by virtues. Only then we can follow Jesus, keep the commandments, and thereby accumulate treasure in heaven.

Laws do not limit individual happiness. It ensures common good, helps in distinguishing good and evil, to be our guide in our life and to lead a moral life. Laws are essential to make free choices in life, to maintain peace and happiness in personal life, ecclesial life and social life. Laws enlighten us in our journey to eternal life. **Therefore, knowledge about laws and training to live according to them is required. We have to make a decision to follow the law.** It is only then that life with Jesus becomes possible, to become young men and women who follow Jesus.

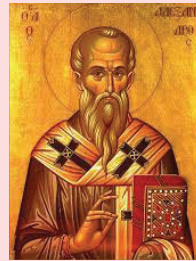
My Convictions



1. Law must be obeyed to create a situation of goodness and justice.
2. Not only the goal but also the means must be good.
3. As a Christian, I owe it to myself to live a virtuous life.

Read and Make Notes

YOUCAT 315, 317, 318,
319, CCC1849



"Abstaining from evil alone is not righteousness; neglecting good is also wrong. In both cases, the law is violated"

St. Athanasius.



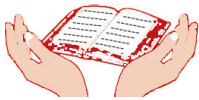
Should we limit the consumption of material things like electronic media, beauty products and food items? Why?



Rom 7:1-25



YOUCAT 294,301,302



Let Us Read the Word of God

The Gospel According to
Mark Chapters 1-5



Let Us Illumine Our Hearts

"In everything do to others as you
would have them do to you; for this
is the law and prophets"
(Mt 7:12).



My Resolution

I will abide by the rules derived
from the morality of the divine law.