

**C**anon

**L**aw

**C**ode

**L**ife

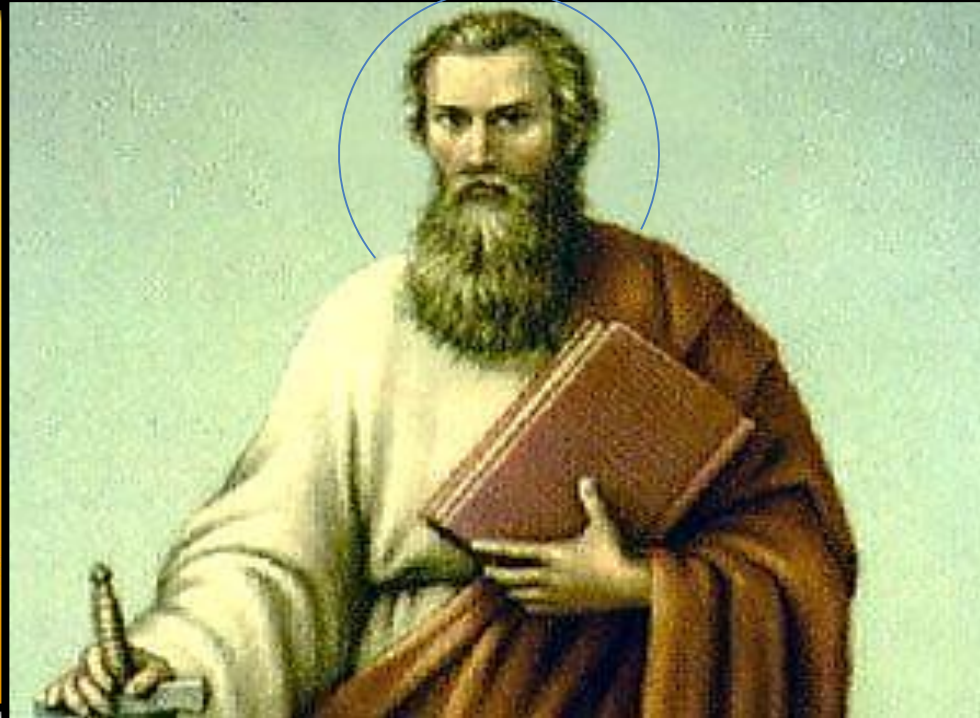
**Canon Law: A Code for Life**  
**Part 1**



**“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”** Matthew 28:19-20











**Rome**

**Constantinople**

**Jerusalem**

**Antioch**

**Alexandria**



“ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:44-47



“Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.” John 20:21-23

“And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” Acts 1:23-26

“ And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings....” 1 Corinthians 12:28

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.”

Acts 15:28-29

“ Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists,<sup>[a]</sup> because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup> Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; <sup>4</sup> but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:1-4



“Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. <sup>47</sup> And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, <sup>48</sup> and said to them, “Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.” Luke 9:46-48

“So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup> You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.<sup>14</sup> If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ” John 13:12-15

# So Far...

- 1. The Lord established the Church which became community of believers.
- 2. The Lord instituted rules and guidelines for the church while HE was here on earth.
- 3. The Lord gave the authority to the Apostles to govern the church.
- 4. Early in the book of acts, we see the Apostles establishing certain rules for the community of faith.

## So Far...

- 5. The Church expands and grows, adding to herself thousands more people.
- 6. These people come with imperfections and shortcomings and are in need of continual guidance while they navigate their way to the kingdom.
- 7. Because all people are imperfect, Canon law has been established to help the church stay spiritually healthy, to focus on the Kingdom, to relate to one another and to relate to the world according to God's will.



# What is Canon Law?

***Κανὼν*** (Greek) – a rule; a ruler by which something is measured

***Canon*** (English)

***قانون*** (Arabic)

A group of Laws to govern the life of the Church & the Believer

# What is Canon Law?

- Rules & standards for Christian behavior
  - Practical Rules based on Doctrinal Truths
  - Rules that are conducive to the well-being of the Church
    - the organization of the church
    - the clergy
    - the liturgical practices
    - The personal affairs of the laity
- Goal?
    - To best serve & worship God
    - To keep the Church from evil.
      - Abuse of Power
      - Administrative Chaos
    - To assure the spiritual growth & perfection of the faithful, to live in communion with God, to attain maturity in Christ and to attain the Kingdom of heaven.
      - In other words, the purpose of Canon Law is the Spiritual perfection of the faithful.

# Types of Canon Law?

## General

- Laws derived from the Holy Bible and are considered to be of Divine Origin
- Laws introduced by the wisdom of the Fathers, written by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Ecumenical Councils
- Recognized by all
- Binding upon all
- Reflect Doctrine
- Considered Invariable
- No exceptions permitted

## Local

- Reflecting a specific time
- Pastoral guidelines for specific situations
- Not recognized by all
- Not Binding upon all
- Subject to change because they were based on varying conditions of time, place and local Customs & Traditions



# Sources of Canon Law?

- **Five Main Sources of Canon Law:**

- ***1. The Holy Bible***

- Acts 15, & Leviticus 12 (40/80 women) & other Divine Laws

- ***2. The Ecumenical Councils***

- Nicaea, Constantinople & Ephesus

- ***3. The Local Councils***

- Ancyra -314AD, Neo Caesarea-352AD, Carthage 419AD

- ***4. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers***

- Didache, Constitution of the Holy Apostles etc...

- ***5. The Patristic Fathers & Saints***

- St. Hippolytus (38) St. Athanasius (107), St. Basil (129) etc...

# Models of Authority Compared

- **Different Models of Authority**

- **1. Roman Catholic**

- One Man- the Pope of Rome

- **2. Protestant**

- Any Man

- **3. Orthodox (Oriental & Eastern)**

- The Holy Synod → Ecumenical Council → Canons

Questions?

