

The Traditions of God vs. the Traditions of Men

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

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Traditions of God

Traditions of God are the infallible doctrinal laws and warranted disciplinary laws decreed by God's ministers

Traditions of God are the infallible doctrinal laws and warranted disciplinary laws decreed by the ministers of God's Church. Infallible doctrinal laws deal with faith and morals and are called dogmatic laws. Warranted disciplinary laws are valid laws that rule, regulate, and manage the things of the Catholic Church. Dogmatic laws and disciplinary laws are also called precepts or ordinances.

God's Church during the Old Covenant era was the Jewish Church (also called the synagogue) and its ministers; that is, the high priest and other Levitical priests and the prophets. It is they who possessed and handed down the traditions of God during the Old Covenant era:

Isaias the prophet says, "This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit that is in thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." (Isa. 59:21)

Jesus, son of Sirach, says, "Stand in the multitude of ancients that are wise, and join thyself from thy heart to their wisdom, that thou mayest hear every discourse of God, and the sayings of praise may not escape thee." (Eccus. 6:35)

King David says, "The heavens shall confess thy wonders, O Lord, and thy truth in the Church of the saints." (Ps. 88:6)

The Machabees say, “We are ready to die rather than to transgress the laws of God, received from our fathers.” (2 Mac. 7:2)

God’s Church during the New Covenant era is the Catholic Church and its ministers; that is, the apostles and other disciples and the following popes, Catholic bishops, and Church Fathers over the centuries. Jesus commanded the ministers of his Catholic Church to teach in his name until the consummation of the world:

“And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (Mt. 28:18-20)

The Church, then, that teaches the truth during the New Covenant era is the Catholic Church. St. Paul calls her “the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” (1 Tim. 3:15) And St. Paul teaches that he and the other Catholic bishops are God’s ministers, God’s coadjutors, entrusted by God to teach and enforce the traditions of God:

“For we are God’s coadjutors: you are God’s husbandry, you are God’s building.” (1 Cor. 3:9)

“Therefore, we also give thanks to God without ceasing: because, that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed.” (1 Thes. 2:13)

“We charge you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the tradition which they have received of us... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and do not keep company with him.” (2 Thess. 3:6, 14)

“Paul, an apostle, not of men neither by man but by Jesus Christ and God the Father... For I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal. 1:1, 11-12)

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle.” (2 Thes. 2:14)

Hence the dogmatic laws and warranted disciplinary laws of God’s ministers are the traditions of God and thus not the traditions of men.

St. Luke says that the Christians “were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles.” (Acts 2:42) The “doctrine of the apostles” is all of the dogmatic laws as infallibly defined by the popes or by the unanimous consensus of the apostles and other Church Fathers; that is, by the Catholic Church’s solemn magisterium and by its ordinary magisterium.¹

Even though St. Luke did not say that the apostles were persevering in the doctrine of Christ or the doctrine of God, this is implied because the doctrine of the apostles (the Catholic faith) is the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of God, as taught and enforced by the apostles and following popes, Catholic bishops, and Church Fathers.

Likewise, St. Paul “went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients.” (Acts 15:41) He did not say “the precepts of Christ” or “of God,” but this is implied. And St. Paul said,

¹ See *RJMI Topic Index*: Magisterium.

“Keep my ordinances as I have delivered them to you.” (1 Cor. 11:2) He did not say “God’s ordinances,” but this is also implied because he was God’s minister.

Hence the dogmatic laws and the warranted disciplinary laws of the apostles and following popes, Catholic bishops, and Church Fathers are traditions of God and not traditions of men:

Didascalia [The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles], by the apostles and other Church Fathers, 1st to 3rd century: “[Chap. 1] ...Hear the teaching of God, ye who hope for and expect his promises, according as it was written by order of our Saviour, and is in accordance with His glorious commandments!...

“[Chap. 3] ...Peter said, Brethren, other things concerning admonition the Scriptures teach, but let us command and teach the things that we have been commanded...

“[Chap. 8] Holy Catholic Church, those who remain continually before the Lord God. Therefore ye are to your people priests and prophets and chiefs and governors and teachers and mediators between God and the believers, receivers of the Word, preachers of it, evangelists of it, knowers of the Scriptures and of the words of God, witnesses of His will...

“[Chap. 10] In like manner therefore, ye also, O pastors, conduct yourselves; because the Church is a body, the members being we who believe in God, and are in love in the fear of the Lord according to the commandment of the tradition which we have received.”

The Apostolic Constitutions, by the apostles and other Church Fathers, 1st to 4th centuries: “Let the presbyters be esteemed by you to represent us the apostles, and let them be the teachers of divine knowledge; since our Lord, when He sent us, said, ‘Go and teach all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’² ...You shall honour him that speaks to you the word of God, and be mindful of him day and night; and you shall reverence him... For where the doctrine concerning God is, there God is present. You shall every day seek the face of the saints, that you may acquiesce in their words.³”

Council of Gangra, 325: “Epilogue - ... We wish that all things which have been delivered by the Holy Scriptures and the Apostolical traditions may be observed in the Church.”

Pope St. Zosimus, *Epistle 29 (In requirendis)*, to the African bishops, 417: “In seeking the things of God...preserving the examples of ancient tradition...you have strengthened the vigor of your religion...with true reason, for you have confirmed that reference must be made to our judgment, realizing what is due the Apostolic See, since all of us [popes] placed in this position desire to follow the Apostle, from whom the episcopate itself and all the authority of this name have emerged. Following him we know how to condemn evils just as well as how to approve praiseworthy things. Take this as an example, guarding with your sacerdotal office the practices of the fathers, you resolve that they must not be trampled upon because they made their decisions not by human but by divine judgment, so that they thought that nothing whatever, although it concerned separated and remote provinces, should be concluded unless it first came to the attention of this See, so that what was a just proclamation might be confirmed by the total authority of this See, and from this source (just as all waters proceed from their natal fountain and through diverse regions of the whole world remain pure liquids of an uncorrupted source), the other churches might assume what they ought to teach, whom they

² b. 2, s. 4, xxvi.

³ b. 7, s. 1, ix.

ought to wash, those whom the water worthy of clean bodies would shun as though defiled with filth incapable of being cleansed.” (D. 100)

Pope St. Zosimus, *Quamvis Patrum Traditio*, to the African bishops, 418: “The tradition of the Fathers has attributed such great authority to the Apostolic See that no one would dare to disagree wholly with its judgment, and it has always preserved this [judgment] by canons and rules, and current ecclesiastical discipline up to this time by its laws pays the reverence which is due to the name of Peter, from whom it has itself descended...; since therefore Peter the head is of such great authority and he has confirmed the subsequent endeavors of all our ancestors, so that the Roman Church is fortified...by human as well as by divine laws,⁴ and it does not escape you that we rule its place and also hold power of the name itself, nevertheless you know, dearest brethren, and as priests you ought to know,...we have such great authority that no one can dare to retract from our decision...” (D. 109)

Second Council of Constantinople, the fifth ecumenical council, 553: “We confess that we hold and declare the faith given from the beginning by the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ to the holy Apostles, and preached by them in the whole world, which the sacred Fathers both confessed and explained, and handed down to the holy churches, and especially those Fathers who assembled in the four sacred Synods, whom we follow and accept through all things and in all things.”⁵

Second Council of Nicea, the seventh ecumenical council, 787: “(II. Proof) For thus the doctrine of our holy Fathers, that is, the tradition of the Catholic Church which has received the Gospel from and even to the end of the world is strengthened. Thus we follow Paul, who spoke in Christ (2 Cor. 2:17), and all the divine apostolic group and the paternal sanctity keeping the traditions (2 Thess. 2:14) which we have received.”⁶

Fourth Council of Constantinople, the eighth ecumenical council, 860-870: “Canon 1. With a loud voice with Isaias we cry to the Lord God: ‘Thy precepts are a light upon the earth’ (Isa. 26:9: LXX). For to the light truly have been assimilated the exhortations and dissuasions of the divine canons, according as that which is better is discerned from that which is worse, and the expedient and profitable from that which is recognized as not expedient but even harmful. Therefore we profess to keep and guard the rules, which have been handed down for the holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church by the holy, noted apostles as well as by the universal and also the local Councils of the orthodox...Paul, the great apostle, openly gave warning *to hold* indeed the traditions which we have received *either through the word or through the epistle* (2 Thess. 2:14) of the saints who have previously been distinguished.” (D. 336)

Biblical and extra-biblical traditions of God

Biblical traditions of God are the traditions of God which are contained in the Bible, some explicitly and some implicitly. Implicit biblical traditions of God are those traditions which are contained in the Bible but are described by different words, such as “Incarnation” and “Holy Eucharist.”

Extra-biblical traditions of God are not contained in the Bible either explicitly or implicitly, such as the dogma that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

⁴ Human laws, in this context, mean disciplinary laws made indirectly by God through his ministers. And divine laws are dogmatic laws and disciplinary laws made directly by God either by dictation to a holy man or by the Holy Spirit speaking through a pope or the unanimous consensus of the Church Fathers.

⁵ Concerning the condemnation of the Three Chapters; D. 212.

⁶ Action 7; D. 303.

Hence the traditions of God (that is, the dogmatic laws and warranted disciplinary laws of God) are taught not only in the Bible but also in extra-biblical sources. This is obvious regarding disciplinary laws because these laws are made, abolished, or revised depending on the circumstances of time and place in the history of the Catholic Church. And this is obvious regarding dogmatic laws because there have arisen new opinions regarding the faith or morals that need to be either infallibly approved or infallibly condemned:

St. Paul says, “For first of all I hear that when you come together in the church, there are schisms among you; and in part I believe it. For there must be also heresies: that they also, who are approved, may be made manifest among you.” (1 Cor. 11:18-19)

Regarding dogmatic and disciplinary laws, St. Paul tells Catholics to obey not only the written word (such as the gospels and epistles contained in the Bible and other epistles not contained in the Bible) but also the oral word that is thus not contained in the Bible or any other written source:

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle.” (2 Thes. 2:14)

Catholic Commentary on 2 Thes. 2:14: “Traditions...whether by word, or by our epistle: Therefore the apostle did not deliver all things that were to be believed, by writing; but many things by word of mouth only, which have been perpetuated by tradition, and these traditions, no less than the writings of the apostles, are deserving of faith.”

And the Second Council of Nicea in 787 and the Fourth Council of Constantinople in 869-870 infallibly teach the same:

Second Council of Nicea, the seventh ecumenical council, 787: “If anyone rejects all ecclesiastical tradition either written or not written...let him be anathema.”⁷

Fourth Council of Constantinople, the eighth ecumenical council, 860-870: “Canon 1. ...Therefore we profess to keep and guard the rules, which have been handed down for the holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church by the holy, noted apostles as well as by the universal and also the local Councils of the orthodox...Paul, the great apostle, openly gave warning *to hold* indeed the traditions which we have received *either through the word or through the epistle* (2 Thess. 2:14) of the saints who have previously been distinguished.” (D. 336)

Traditions of God not taught by Jesus

Jesus told the apostles that there were many dogmas they would need to know but were not ready at that time to learn:

“I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth.” (Jn. 16:12-13)

Hence not everything the apostles needed to know was in the Old Testament or taught to them by Jesus. Jesus told them that these other dogmas would be taught to them by the Holy Spirit and thus after Jesus ascended into heaven and thus was no longer physically among the apostles. One such dogma, as recorded in the Bible, is the dogma that

⁷ Action 8; D. 308.

circumcision is no longer necessary during the New Covenant era. Jesus never told the apostles that circumcision is abolished under the New Covenant, and hence there was a legitimate dispute among the apostles regarding this. It was not until about AD 50 that the Holy Spirit taught them this dogma at the Council of Jerusalem, when St. Peter, the first pope, infallibly defined that circumcision is not necessary under the New Covenant era. As time went on, there were more dogmas that the Holy Spirit taught the popes and that they would then infallibly define—when they were ready to bear it and the time was right, such as the dogma that the Holy Spirit proceeds not just from the Father but also from the Son, which was first infallibly defined in 382 at the Council of Rome by Pope St. Damasus:

Pope St. Damasus, *Council of Rome*, 382: "...For the Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father or not only the Spirit of the Son, but the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. For it is written: *If anyone love the world, the Spirit of the Father is not in him* (1 Jn. 2:15). Likewise it is written: *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Rom. 8:9). When the Father and the Son are mentioned in this way, the Holy Spirit is understood, of whom the Son himself says in the Gospel, that the Holy Spirit *proceedeth from the Father* (Jn. 15:26), and *he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you.* (Jn. 16:14)" (D. 83)

Jesus did not give his followers the name "Christian." The Holy Spirit did, at Antioch sometime after Jesus ascended into heaven:

"At Antioch the disciples were first named Christians." (Acts 11:26)

Implicit biblical traditions of God are described by different words in the Bible

Likewise, Jesus' followers were not called Catholics until sometime later, when necessity required it. The word Catholic means universal. And God's Church during the New Covenant era is universal; that is, meant to be spread and to exist throughout the whole world:

"And he [Jesus] said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mk. 16:15)

St. Paul says, "But I say: Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world." (Rom. 10:18)

"And he hath subjected all things under his [Jesus'] feet, and hath made him head over all the Church, which is his body..." (Eph. 1:22-23)

"He [Jesus] is the head of the body, the Church... And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, both as to the things that are on earth, and the things that are in heaven." (Col. 1:18-20)

Hence even though the words "Catholic Church" are not explicitly in the Bible, the Catholic Church is described in the Bible by different words which teach that God's Church during the New Covenant era is meant to be spread and thus exist throughout the whole world, which means it will be universal and thus Catholic, which is the Latin word for "universal" or "throughout the whole world." As local sects and local Churches rose up in opposition to the true Church, the Church became known as the Catholic Church or the Universal Church to distinguish it from the local sects and Churches that were not spread through the whole world but limited to certain locations in the world, such as

today with the Anglican Church in England and the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia. When God's Church was called the Catholic Church, its members were then called not only Christians but also Catholics. Hence the title "Catholic" came from the implicit biblical traditions of God.

Some other words that are not explicitly in the Bible but are described in the Bible by different words are "Holy Trinity," "Incarnation," and "Holy Eucharist."

"Holy Trinity" are the words given to the existence of the one God in three divine Persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Even though each Person is God, there is only one God. The words "Holy Trinity" are described in the Bible by different words:

"And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Mt. 28:18-19)

"And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. And these three are one." (1 Jn. 5:7)

"Incarnation" is the word given to the event in which Jesus, who is God from all eternity, also became man in time in the womb of the Virgin Mary, which the Bible describes in the following words:

"In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God... And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (Jn. 1:1-2, 14)

"And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus." (Lk. 1:30-31)

"Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Mt. 1:23)

"Holy Eucharist," also called "Holy Communion," are the words given to Jesus Christ's body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine. The Bible describes the Holy Eucharist in the following words:

"Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." (Jn. 6:54)

"And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is my body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." (Mt. 26:26-28)

"The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (1 Cor. 10:16)

Indeed, the very word "Bible" is not in the Bible. Hence the words "Catholic," "Holy Trinity," "Incarnation," "Holy Eucharist," and "Bible" come from the implicit biblical traditions of God and are described by different words in the Bible.

Extra-biblical traditions of God are not in the Bible nor described in the Bible

However, extra-biblical traditions of God are not in the Bible nor even described in the Bible by different words. Hence the basis for these traditions is not found in the Bible but only in the extra-biblical traditions of God. Take the following examples.

St. Paul speaks of certain aspects of an Old Covenant ritual (the mixing of the blood with water and then sprinkling the book with this mixture) that is not mentioned in the Old Testament and thus he had to know about this part of the ritual from extra-biblical sources:

St. Paul: "For when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you." (Heb. 9:19-20)

Old Testament: "And he sent young men of the children of Israel, and they offered holocausts, and sacrificed pacific victims of calves to the Lord. Then Moses took half of the blood and put it into bowls, and the rest he poured upon the altar. And taking the book of the covenant, he read it in the hearing of the people, and they said: All things that the Lord hath spoken we will do, we will be obedient. And he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." (Ex. 24:5-8)

Catholic Commentary on Heb. 9:19: "Here we may learn that the Scriptures contain not all necessary rites or truths, when neither the place to which the Apostle alludeth nor any other mentioneth some of these ceremonies and thus he had them by extra-biblical tradition."

St. James speaks of Elias' prayer that held back rain and then caused it to rain again which is not mentioned in the Old Testament:

"Elias was a man passible like unto us: and with prayer he prayed that it might not rain upon the earth, and it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again: and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." (Ja. 5:17-18)

Catholic Commentary on Ja. 5:17: "**He prayed:** The Scriptures to which the Apostle alludeth, make no mention of Elias' prayer. Therefore he knew it by extra-biblical tradition."

The Old Testament does not give the names of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses, but St. Paul does. Hence St. Paul got this information from extra-biblical sources:

"Now as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith." (2 Tim. 3:8)

"So Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh and did as the Lord had commanded. And Aaron took the rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it was turned into a serpent. And Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians, and they also by Egyptian enchantments and certain secrets did in like manner." (Ex. 7:10-11)

Just as the names of the Blessed Virgin Mary's parents are not mentioned in the Bible, yet we know she had parents and we know their names, Ss. Joachim and Anne, solely from the extra-biblical traditions of God.

After all, St. John said that not all things that Jesus did and taught are in the Bible:

“But there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written.” (Jn. 21:25)

Indeed, many other things that Jesus did and taught should be written and have been written by the extra-biblical traditions of God, which extends from the time of the apostles to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Another fact to mention is that some books that belonged to the Old Testament have been lost and thus are no longer available, such as the words of Nathan the prophet, the books of Ahias the Silonite, the vision of Addo the seer, and the book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel:

“Now the rest of the acts of Solomon first and last are written in the words of Nathan the prophet, and in the books of Ahias the Silonite, and in the vision of Addo the seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nabat.” (2 Par. 9:29)

Catholic Commentary on 2 Par. 9:29: “The works of these three are not extant.”

“And the rest of the acts of Abia, and of his ways and works, are written diligently in the book of Addo the prophet.” (2 Par. 13:22)

“And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he fought, and how he reigned, behold they are written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel.” (3 Ki. 14:19)

Catholic Commentary on 3 Ki. 14:19: “**The book of the words of the days of the kings of Israel:** This book, which is often mentioned in the Book of Kings, is long since lost. For as to the books of Paralipomenon or Chronicles (which the Hebrews call the words of the days), they were certainly written after the Book of Kings, since they frequently refer to them; and they also refer us to these journals for further information.”

Certainly there are things taught in these lost books that are not contained in the Bible we have today, and thus these things went from being biblical traditions of God to extra-biblical traditions of God.

Warranted disciplinary laws are traditions of God

The traditions of God consist not only of dogmatic laws but also of warranted disciplinary laws; that is, laws that rule, regulate, and manage the things of the Catholic Church. Every organization needs disciplinary laws to keep law and order and to enforce its laws and thus to survive and thrive. The same applies to God’s Church, not just under the Old Covenant but also under the New Covenant, in which some of the disciplinary laws were made either directly by God or indirectly by God through his ministers.

The Book of Exodus, beginning at Chapter 21 (which starts out as “These are the judgments which thou shalt set before them”), and the Book of Leviticus contain many disciplinary laws that God directly or indirectly gave to Moses, which Moses then enjoined upon the believers.

Even though Jesus placed dogmatic laws over disciplinary laws, he nevertheless teaches that both dogmatic laws and warranted disciplinary laws must be obeyed and thus are traditions of God. When the Pharisees were obeying disciplinary laws but disobeying dogmatic laws and thus putting disciplinary laws over dogmatic laws, Jesus rebuked them and told them to keep both laws:

“Woe to you, Pharisees, because you tithe mint and rue and every herb [keep disciplinary laws], and pass over judgment and the charity of God [dogmatic laws]. Now these things [disciplinary laws] you ought to have done, and not to leave the other [dogmatic laws] undone.” (Lk. 11:42)

St. Peter and St. Paul tell Christians to obey *all* of their ordinances and precepts and hence not only their dogmatic laws but also their disciplinary laws:

St. Peter: “Behold this second epistle I write to you, my dearly beloved, in which I stir up by way of admonition your sincere mind: That you may be mindful of those words which I told you before from the holy prophets, and of your apostles, of the precepts of the Lord and Saviour.” (2 Pt. 3:1-2)

St. Paul: “Now I praise you, brethren, that in all things you are mindful of me and keep my ordinances as I have delivered them to you. (1 Cor. 11:2) And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. (2 Thes. 3:14) But Paul choosing Silas, departed, being delivered by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients. (Acts 15:40-41)”

Therefore during the Old Covenant era and during the New Covenant era, God’s ministers have made warranted disciplinary laws to regulate the rituals and sacraments, the hierarchy of the Church, the priesthood and its functions, the reception of converts, the punishment and forgiveness of sinners, the spiritual life and some aspects of the temporal life of the faithful, the construction and maintenance of religious structures, and the income and expenses of the Church. And all of these disciplinary laws are traditions of God and not of men because they are warranted.

Some warranted disciplinary laws under the Old Covenant

Method of offering sacrifices to God:

“When any one shall offer an oblation of sacrifice to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense, and shall bring it to the sons of Aaron the priests: and one of them shall take a handful of the flour and oil, and all the frankincense, and shall put it a memorial upon the altar for a most sweet savour to the Lord. And the remnant of the sacrifice shall be Aaron’s, and his sons,’ holy of holies of the offerings of the Lord.” (Lev. 2:1-3)

The punishment and forgiveness of sinners:

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Whosoever shall sin, and despising the Lord, shall deny to his neighbour the thing delivered to his keeping which was committed to his trust; or shall by force extort any thing, or commit oppression; or shall find a thing lost, and denying it, shall also swear falsely, or shall do any other of the many things wherein men are wont to sin: Being convicted of the offence, he shall restore all that he would have gotten by fraud, in the principal, and the fifth part besides to the owner whom he wronged. Moreover for his sin he shall offer a ram without blemish out of the flock, and shall give it to the priest, according to the estimation and measure of the offence: And he shall pray for him before the Lord, and he shall have forgiveness for every thing in doing of which he hath sinned.” (Lev. 6:1-7)

Laws regarding tithes:

“Thou shalt not delay to pay thy tithes and thy firstfruits... (Ex. 22:29) All tithes of the land, whether of corn or of the fruits of trees, are the Lord’s and are sanctified to him. (Lev. 27:30)”

Method of consecrating priests and the head of the Church:

“And thou shalt also do this, that they may be consecrated to me in priesthood. Take a calf from the herd, and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, and a cake without leaven, tempered with oil, wafers also unleavened anointed with oil: thou shalt make them all of wheaten flour. And thou shalt put them in a basket and offer them, and the calf and the two rams. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of the testimony. And when thou hast washed the father and his sons with water, thou shalt clothe Aaron with his vestments, that is, with the linen garment and the tunic, and the ephod and the rational, which thou shalt gird with the girdle. And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and the holy plate upon the mitre, and thou shalt pour the oil of unction upon his head: and by this rite shall he be consecrated. Thou shalt bring his sons also and shalt put on them the linen tunics, and gird them with a girdle, to wit, Aaron and his children, and thou shalt put mitres upon them, and they shall be priests to me by a perpetual ordinance. After thou shalt have consecrated their hands, thou shalt present also the calf before the tabernacle of the testimony. And Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon his head, and thou shalt kill him in the sight of the Lord, beside the door of the tabernacle of the testimony. And taking some of the blood of the calf, thou shalt put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and the rest of the blood thou shalt pour at the bottom thereof.” (Ex. 29:1-12)

Regulations for the high priest, bishops (chief priests), and priests:

High priest: “He exalted Aaron his brother, and like to himself of the tribe of Levi: He made an everlasting covenant with him, and gave him the priesthood of the nation, and made him blessed in glory, and he girded him about with a glorious girdle, and clothed him with a robe of glory, and crowned him with majestic attire. He put upon him a garment to the feet, and breeches, and an ephod, and he compassed him with many little bells of gold all round about, that as he went there might be a sound and a noise made that might be heard in the temple for a memorial to the children of his people. He gave him a holy robe of gold, and blue, and purple, a woven work of a wise man, endued with judgment and truth, of twisted scarlet the work of an artist, with precious stones cut and set in gold, and graven by the work of a lapidary for a memorial, according to the number of the tribes of Israel; and a crown of gold upon his mitre wherein was engraved Holiness, an ornament of honour, a work of power and delightful to the eyes for its beauty.” (Eccus. 45:7-14)

Priests: The whole chapter of Leviticus 21. Here is the first verse: “The Lord said also to Moses: Speak to the priests the sons of Aaron, and thou shalt say to them: Let not a priest incur an uncleanness at the death of his citizens.” (Lev. 21:1)

Some warranted disciplinary laws under the New Covenant

The eating of meats that were forbidden under the Old Covenant:

“And he [St. Peter] saw the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great linen sheet let down by the four corners from heaven to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four footed beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him: Arise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said: Far be it from me, for I never did eat any thing that is common and unclean. And the voice spoke to him again the second time: That which God hath cleansed,

do not thou call common. And this was done thrice; and presently the vessel was taken up into heaven.” (Acts 10:11-16)

No eating meals during Mass:

“Now this I ordain: not praising you, that you come together not for the better, but for the worse... When you come therefore together into one place, it is not now to eat the Lord’s supper [as it should be]. For every one taketh before his own supper to eat. And one indeed is hungry and another is drunk.” (1 Cor. 11:17-21)

Catholic Commentary on 1 Cor. 11:20: “**The Lord’s supper:** So the apostle here calls the charity feasts observed by the primitive Christians, and reprehends the abuses of the Corinthians on these occasions, which were the more criminal because these feasts were accompanied with the celebrating of the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament.”

Punishment of excommunication for incestuous men:

“It is absolutely heard that there is fornication among you; and such fornication as the like is not among the heathens, that one should have his father’s wife. And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he might be taken away from among you that hath done this thing. I indeed, absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, him that hath so done, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your glorying is not good. Know you not that a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ our pasch is sacrificed.” (1 Cor. 5:1-7)

On head coverings when praying:

“Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered disgraceth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head not covered disgraceth her head, for it is all one as if she were shaven.” (1 Cor. 11:4-5)

Regulations for bishops, priests, and deacons:

“For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and shouldest ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee, if any be without crime, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be without crime, as the steward of God: not proud, not subject to anger, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, gentle, sober, just, holy, continent; embracing that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine and to convince the gainsayers.” (Titus 1:5-9)

“A faithful saying: If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. It behoveth therefore a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife, sober, prudent, of good behaviour, chaste, given to hospitality, a teacher, not given to wine, no striker, but modest, not quarrelsome, not covetous, but one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all chastity. But if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a neophyte, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the judgment of the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony of them who are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Deacons in like manner chaste, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; and so let them minister, having no crime... Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, who rule well their children and their own houses. For they that have ministered well

shall purchase to themselves a good degree and much confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 3:1-13)

Regulation of tithes, offerings, and donations:

“Now concerning the collections that are made for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so do ye also. On the first day of the week, let every one of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him, that when I come the collections be not then to be made.” (1 Cor. 16:1-2)

God killed Ananias and Saphira for holding back money promised to the Church:
“But a certain man named Ananias, with Saphira his wife, sold a piece of land and by fraud kept back part of the price of the land, his wife being privy thereunto, and bringing a certain part of it, laid it at the feet of the apostles. But Peter said: Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Spirit and by fraud keep part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God. And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the spirit. And there came great fear upon all that heard it.” (Acts 5:1-5)

(See in this book [Unwarranted disciplinary laws are traditions of men and thus invalid](#), p. 17.)

Traditions of Men

Regarding religion, laws that are contrary to the faith and disciplinary laws that are unwarranted are traditions of men.

1) Laws contrary to the faith are traditions of men

Fallible doctrinal laws or disciplinary laws that are contrary to the faith (which during the New Covenant era is the Catholic faith) are traditions of men and thus are invalid, null and void. They are either heretical or idolatrous. Therefore,

- All false religions, which by their very nature are contrary to the Catholic faith, are traditions of men. Therefore not only Islam, apostate Judaism, and pagan religions are traditions of men, but also nominal Christian religions (such as the Protestant and Russian and Greek Orthodox religions) are traditions of men because they too are false religions.
- And nominal Catholic laws that are heretical or idolatrous are traditions of men because they too are contrary to the Catholic faith. Even though they pretend to be valid Catholic laws, they are nevertheless invalid, null and void.

The word of God condemns the false religions of paganism, mythology, philosophy, astrology, etc.:

“Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Col. 2:8)

“Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God saith: I will dwell in them, and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, Go out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” (2 Cor. 6:14-17)

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Eph. 5:11)

“But the things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God. And I would not that you should be made partakers with devils. You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils.” (1 Cor. 10:20-21)

“For all the gods of the Gentiles are devils.” (Ps. 95:5)

The word of God condemns nominal Christian religions and nominal Catholic laws that contradict or doubt the Catholic faith:

“I wonder that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. Which is not another, only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.” (Gal. 1:6-8)

“For we are not as many, adulterating the word of God; but with sincerity, but as from God, before God, in Christ we speak.” (2 Cor. 2:17)

“Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not Christ our Lord, but their own belly, and by pleasing speeches and good words seduce the hearts of the gullible.” (Rom. 16:17-18)

“And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God, and this is Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he cometh and he is now already in the world.” (1 Jn. 4:3)

“For there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables.” (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” (Mt. 7:15-17)

“For such false apostles are deceitful workmen, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light.” (2 Cor. 11:13-14)

“For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect.” (Mt. 24:24)

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition and deny the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their riotousness, through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” (2 Pt. 2:1-2)

Therefore not only nominal Catholic laws that are contrary to the Catholic faith but also nominal Christian religions (which by their very nature are contrary to the Catholic faith) have no link with the dogmatic traditions of God. Instead, the dogmatic traditions of God (as handed down by the unanimous teachings of the apostles and following Church Fathers and infallible papal decrees) condemn them.⁸ The word of God teaches that the dogmatic traditions of God are decreed, enforced, and handed down over the centuries in his Church by his ministers and that they can never be abolished or modified and thus will remain the same forever:

“Stand in the multitude of ancients that are wise, and join thyself from thy heart to their wisdom, that thou mayst hear every discourse of God, and the sayings of praise may not escape thee.” (Eccus. 6:35)

“Pass not beyond the ancient bounds which thy fathers have set.” (Prv. 22:28)

“Thus saith the Lord: Stand ye on the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, which is the good way, and walk ye in it: and you shall find refreshment for your souls.” (Jer. 6:16)

“Dearly beloved, taking all care to write unto you concerning your common salvation, I was under a necessity to write unto you to beseech you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. For certain men are secretly entered in (who were written of long ago unto this judgment), ungodly men, turning the grace of our Lord God into riotousness, and denying the only sovereign Ruler, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 1:3-4)

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called, which some promising, have erred concerning the faith.” (1 Tim. 6:20-21)

“And the things which thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men, who shall be fit to teach others also.” (2 Tim. 2:2)

“Understanding this first, that no prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation. For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time; but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pt. 1:20-21)

“This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit that is in thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.” (Isa. 59:21)

“Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever. Be not led away with various and strange doctrines.” (Heb. 13:8)

And the word of God teaches the following regarding papal infallibility:

“Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.” (Mt. 16:16-19)

⁸ See in this article [Traditions of God are taught by the true Church in the true religion by God’s ministers](#), p. 1. And see *RJMI Topic Index: Magisterium*.

Hence during the New Covenant era, the dogmatic traditions of God are decreed by the unanimous consensus of the apostles and other Church Fathers (the ordinary magisterium) and by infallible papal decrees (the solemn magisterium) and handed down and enforced by the following ministers of the Catholic Church.

Consequently, all false religions (which by their very nature are contrary to the Catholic faith) and nominal Catholic laws that are contrary to the Catholic faith are traditions of men and thus have no link with the dogmatic traditions of God. Instead, the dogmatic traditions of God condemn them.

For example, the Greek Orthodox Schismatics in the 11th century held the heresy that the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son but only from the Father. This tradition of men was infallibly condemned by the dogmatic tradition of God in 382 at the Council of Rome by Pope St. Damasus:

Pope St. Damasus, *Council of Rome*, 382: "...For the Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of the Father or not only the Spirit of the Son, but the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. For it is written: *If anyone love the world, the Spirit of the Father is not in him* (1 Jn. 2:15). Likewise it is written: *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Rom. 8:9). When the Father and the Son are mentioned in this way, the Holy Spirit is understood, of whom the Son himself says in the Gospel, that the Holy Spirit *proceedeth from the Father* (Jn. 15:26), and *he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you.* (Jn. 16:14)" (D. 83)

One of the nominal Catholic laws that contradicts the Catholic faith and hence is heretical and a tradition of men is the law that allows Catholics to pray in communion with self-professed non-Catholics and heretics:

Apostate Antipope Paul VI, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1964: "8. In certain special circumstances, such as in prayer services 'for unity' and during ecumenical gatherings, it is allowable, indeed desirable, that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren [self-professed non-Catholics]... 15. ...Therefore some worship in common (communicatio in sacris), given suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority, is not only possible but to be encouraged."

This tradition of men was infallibly condemned by the dogmatic tradition of God from Pentecost Day in AD 33 by the unanimous consensus of the apostles and other Church Fathers and by infallible papal decrees:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them." (Rom. 16:17)

"Bear not the yoke with unbelievers... Wherefore, go out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." (2 Cor. 6:14-17)

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11)

"Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house nor say to him, God speed you. For he that saith unto him, God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works." (2 Jn. 1:9-11)

Apostolic Canons, 1st to 4th century: "Canon 54. If any clergyman or layman shall enter into a synagogue of Jews or heretics to pray, let the former be deposed and let the latter be excommunicated."

Council of Carthage, 257: “One must neither pray nor sing psalms with heretics, and whosoever shall communicate with those who are cut off from the communion of the Church, whether clergy or layman, let him be excommunicated.”

Council of Laodicea, 390: “Canon 33. No one shall pray in common with heretics and schismatics. ...Canon 6. It is not permitted to heretics to enter the house of God while they continue in heresy.”

Third Council of Constantinople, 680-681: “If any ecclesiastic or layman shall go into the synagogue of the Jews or the meeting-houses of the heretics to join in prayer with them, let them be deposed and deprived of communion. If any bishop or priest or deacon shall join in prayer with heretics, let him be excommunicated.”

2) Unwarranted disciplinary laws are traditions of men

God gave his ministers under the Old Covenant and now under the New Covenant the power and authority to make not only dogmatic laws but also disciplinary laws. As long as the disciplinary laws are warranted, they are traditions of God. However, if they are unwarranted, then they are traditions of men and thus invalid, null and void. Unwarranted disciplinary laws are either harmful as a general rule, impossible to obey, excessive, unnecessary, or outside the scope of its authority.

Disciplinary laws that contradict the faith

Disciplinary laws that contradict the faith are not only unwarranted but also heretical or idolatrous.

Disciplinary laws that as a general rule are harmful to souls

Disciplinary laws that as a general rule are harmful to souls are unwarranted because they endanger souls as a general rule. Some good disciplinary laws are not harmful to the majority of Christians but harmful only to a few, in which case these few Christians are exempted from these laws either by a dispensation from the proper authority or automatically by the law of epikeia. Epikeia is an automatic exemption from a disciplinary law when it is impossible to obtain a dispensation.⁹

Disciplinary laws that are impossible to obey

Disciplinary laws that are impossible to obey are unwarranted because they are impossible to obey. Jesus rebuked the evil Pharisees for making such laws. He said,

“The scribes and the Pharisees...bind heavy and insupportable burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders; but with a finger of their own they will not move them.”
(Mt. 23:1-4)

⁹ See *RJMI Topic Index: Exemptions from the Law*.

Disciplinary laws that are excessive or unnecessary

Disciplinary laws that are excessive or unnecessary are unwarranted because they are unduly burdensome and serve no good purpose, such as the many and excessive washings the Pharisees instituted during the Old Covenant era, which Jesus condemned as traditions of men. Jesus said,

“In vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and precepts of men. For leaving the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pots and of cups; and many other things you do like to these...” (Mk. 7:5-9)

Hence some unwarranted disciplinary laws made by the evil Pharisees were not only traditions of men but also replaced dogmatic traditions of God and thus violated the commandments of God. Another such case was the evil Pharisees’ unwarranted disciplinary law that commanded children to give money to the Church that was meant for taking care of their parents. The law of taking care of parents was not only a dogmatic tradition of God but also a natural law. Hence the Pharisee’s unwarranted disciplinary law of giving money to the Church instead of taking care of parents was not only a tradition of men but also replaced and abolished a dogmatic tradition of God and denied the natural law:

“But he [Jesus] answering, said to them: Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition? For God said: Honour thy father and mother: And: He that shall curse father or mother, let him die the death. But you say: Whosoever shall say to father or mother, The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me shall profit thee. And he shall not honour his father or his mother, and you have made void the commandment of God for your tradition. Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men.” (Mt. 15:3-9)

Catholic Commentary on Mt. 15:5: **“The gift:** That is, Corban. This tradition of the Pharisees was calculated to enrich themselves by exempting children from giving any further assistance to their parents if they offered to the temple and the priests that which should have been the support of their parents. But this was a violation of the law of God and of nature, which our Savior here condemns. To give to the Church or Altar is not forbidden, but it is impious and unnatural for a man to forsake his parents in their necessity, pretending or excusing the matter upon his giving to God or to the Altar that which should relieve them. And these Pharisees did wickedly by teaching children thus, to neglect their duties to their parents.”

Catholic Commentary on Mt. 15:9: **“Commandments of men:** The doctrines and commandments here reprehended are such as are either contrary to the law of God (as that of neglecting parents under pretense of giving to God) or at least are frivolous, unprofitable, and in no way conducing to true piety (as that of often washing hands, etc., without regard to the purity of the heart). But as to the rules and ordinances of the holy Catholic Church regarding fasts, festivals, etc., these are in no way repugnant to but are highly agreeable to God’s holy word and all Christian piety; neither are they to be counted among the doctrines and commandments of men because they proceed not from mere human authority but from that which Christ has established in his Catholic Church, whose pastors he has commanded us to hear and obey even as himself. (Lk. 10:16; Mt. 18:17) [RJMI: But that does not mean that the rulers of God’s Catholic Church cannot also make harmful and sinful laws (commandments of men) that hence overturn God’s law,

just as the evil Jews did during the Old Covenant era. Indeed, evil rulers of the Catholic Church have made harmful and sinful disciplinary laws.]”

Disciplinary laws that are outside the scope of authority

Disciplinary laws that are outside the scope of ecclesiastical rulers’ authority are unwarranted because they have no authority. For example, an ecclesiastical ruler has no authority to make laws for the secular State which is thus under the jurisdiction of secular rulers (that is, unless the ecclesiastical ruler is also the secular ruler¹⁰). Even though an ecclesiastical ruler cannot make laws for secular States, he can condemn bad laws made by secular rulers and command Catholics to disobey the bad laws. And he can excommunicate Catholic secular rulers if their bad laws merit it.

For example, St. Peter, the first pope, had the authority to rule God’s Catholic Church but he did not have the authority to rule and thus make laws for the pagan Roman Empire. Instead, St. Peter had to obey the secular laws made by the pagan rulers as long as those laws were not contrary to the Catholic faith or sinful in any other way. If any of the secular laws were contrary to the Catholic faith or sinful in any other way, then St. Peter was bound to condemn those laws and not obey them and to command Catholics to do the same. Catholics must give Caesar his due in all things but sin. And Caesar must not interfere with the laws of the Catholic Church because he has no authority to make laws in the Catholic Church unless that authority is legally given to him by a religious ruler. However, for lack of access to a religious authority and when necessity compels, a Catholic secular ruler can make laws for the Catholic Church in order to maintain law and order in the Catholic Church. And likewise for lack of a secular ruler, an ecclesiastical ruler can rule and make laws for a secular State to maintain law and order in that State. See *RJMI Topic Index*: “Caesar’s Due” and “Church and State.”

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¹⁰ For example, the pope is not only the religious ruler of Catholics and Catholic places in the Papal States but also the secular ruler of the Papal States.