

**Canon Law Presentation to Cursillo Pastoral Formation Team  
September 10, 2022, VIA zoom**

**Canon** is the Greek word for rule, norm, standard or measure. It is used in several ways in church language:

**Canon Law** is a code of ecclesiastical laws governing the Catholic Church. In the Latin or Western Church, the governing code is the *1983 Code of Canon Law, a revision of the 1917 Code of Canon Law*. A separate but parallel *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, issued in 1990, governs the Eastern Catholic churches. That document was the first comprehensive code of church law governing all Eastern Catholic churches.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law contains 7 Books (1. General norms, 2. The People of God, 3. The Teaching Function of the Church, 4. The sanctifying Function of the Church, 5. The Temporal Goods of the Church, 6. Sanctions in the Church, 7. Processes) The total number of canons in the code is 1752 ... and the supreme canon amongst these large collection of laws is stated on the last canon, ...

*“Can. 1752 In cases of transfer the prescripts of can. 1747 are to be applied, **canonical equity is to be observed, and the salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law in the Church, is to be kept before one’s eyes.**”*

With that brief introduction of the Code of Canon law... this afternoon I’ll be talking a tiny part of Book II “The People of God” ... in particular the rights and obligations of the lay Christian faithful, **as an integral part of the people of God...**

Book II of the code, “The People of God” does not only reflect its content but also indicates a foundational ecclesiological perspective. It has 543 canons ... and there are ... *Three major division of Book II*

Part I: “The Christian Faithful” cc. 204-329

Part II: “The Hierarchical Constitution of the Church” cc. 330-572

Part III: “Institute of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life” ccc. 573-746

In my presentation this afternoon, I’ll try to give you an overview of the Part I of Book II...

PART I. THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Can. 204-207)

TITLE I. THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF ALL THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Can. 208 - 223)

TITLE II. THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Can. 224 - 231)

Book II, “The People of God” begins with the first 4 canons (Can. 204-207) entitled the “The Christian Faithful”. These canons exercise a determinative role for the interpretation of the succeeding canons and also of the entire code. They introduce critical foundational and ecclesiastical principles.

The foundational aspect was described by JPII himself in reference to the mission incumbent upon the baptized, derived from their participation in the threefold functions (munera) of Christ himself – priest, prophet and ruler. This mission is variously described: “to promote the growth of the Church and its continual sanctification” (c.210); to cooperate in the building up of the body of Christ” (c. 208); to promote

and sustain apostolic action” (c.216). This mission derived from baptism, applies to all the baptized independent to their particular status or condition in the Church.

And the ecclesiological perspective expressed by these four introductory canons was from the document of the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* “Light of the Nations” ... LG 9 states “It has pleased God, however, to sanctify and save men and women not individually and without regard for what binds them together, but to set them up as a people who would acknowledge him in truth and serve him in holiness.” Our common call as people of God, the Church is “... *to enjoys the dignity and freedom of the children of God; their law is Christ’ commandment of love; their goal is the kingdom of God; their mission is to be a light for the world.*”

***PURPOSE OF CANON LAW IN PARTICULAR TO AND FOR THE LAITY... specifically defined in***

BOOK II, Part 1, titles 1 and 2

TITLE I. THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF ALL THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Can. 208 - 223)

TITLE II. THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Can. 224 - 231)

***The Rights and Obligations of the Laity:***

- **The theme of Rights and Obligations of the Laity is new in Canon Law.** This is because of the redefinition of the Church as the people of God... lay Christian faithful have more serious and deep collaboration in the structural Church.
- **The present Code from c.208-231 (24 canons, 16 O&R of all Christian Faithful and 8 O&R of lay Christian Faithful) explicitly states the rights and duties of all Christ’s faithful and lay members of Christ’s faithful.**
- **However, additional duties and rights do exist which are stated in other canons of the Code.**

*Title II: THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF THE LAY CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Cann. 224 - 231)*

Can. 224 In addition to those obligations and rights which are common to all the Christian faithful and those which are established in other canons, the lay Christian faithful are bound by the obligations and possess the rights which are enumerated in the canons of this title.

Can. 225 §1. Since, like all the Christian faithful, lay persons are designated by God for the apostolate through baptism and confirmation, they are bound by the general obligation and possess the right as individuals, or joined in associations, **to work so that the divine message of salvation is made known and accepted by all persons everywhere in the world.** This obligation is even more compelling in those circumstances in which only through them can people hear the gospel and know Christ.

§2. **According to each one’s own condition**, they are also bound by a particular duty to imbue and perfect the order of temporal affairs with the spirit of the gospel and thus to give witness to Christ, **especially in carrying out these same affairs and in exercising secular functions.**

Can. 226 §1. **According to their own vocation**, those who live in the marital state are bound by a special duty to work through **marriage and the family to build up the people of God**.

§2. Since they have given life to their children, **parents have a most grave obligation and possess the right to educate them**. Therefore, it is for Christian parents particularly to take care of the Christian education of their children according to the doctrine handed on by the Church.

Can. 227 The lay Christian faithful have the right to have recognized that freedom which all citizens have in the affairs of the earthly city. When using that same freedom, **however, they are to take care that their actions are imbued with the spirit of the gospel and are to heed the doctrine set forth by the magisterium of the Church**. In matters of opinion, moreover, they are **to avoid setting forth their own opinion as the doctrine of the Church**.

Can. 228 §1. Lay persons **who are found suitable are qualified to be admitted by the sacred pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions** which they are able to exercise according to the precepts of the law.

§2. Lay persons who excel in necessary knowledge, prudence, and integrity are qualified to assist the pastors of the Church **as experts and advisors, even in councils according** to the norm of law.

Can. 229 §1. Lay persons **are bound by the obligation and possess the right to acquire knowledge of Christian doctrine appropriate to the capacity and condition of each in order for them to be able to live according to this doctrine**, announce it themselves, defend it if necessary, and take their part in exercising the apostolate.

§2. They also possess **the right to acquire that fuller knowledge of the sacred sciences which are taught in ecclesiastical universities and faculties or in institutes of religious sciences**, by attending classes there and pursuing academic degrees.

§3. If the prescripts regarding the requisite suitability have been observed, **they are also qualified to receive from legitimate ecclesiastical authority a mandate to teach the sacred sciences**.

Can. 230 §1. Lay persons **who possess the age and qualifications established by decree of the conference of bishops** can be admitted on a stable basis through the prescribed liturgical rite to the **ministries of lector and acolyte**.

Nevertheless, the conferral of these ministries does not grant them the right to obtain support or remuneration from the Church.

§2. Lay persons can fulfill the function of lector in liturgical actions by temporary designation. All lay persons can **also perform the functions of commentator or cantor, or other functions**, according to the norm of law.

**§3. When the need of the Church warrants it and ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply certain of their duties, namely, to exercise the ministry of the word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion, according to the prescripts of the law.**

Can. 231 §1. Lay persons who permanently or temporarily devote themselves to special service of the Church are obliged **to acquire the appropriate formation required to fulfill their function properly and to carry out this function conscientiously, eagerly, and diligently.**

§2. Without prejudice to the prescript of can. 230, §1 and with the prescripts of civil law having been observed, **lay persons have the right to decent remuneration appropriate to their condition so that they are able to provide decently for their own needs and those of their family.** They also have a right for their **social provision, social security, and health benefits to be duly provided.**

## **SECOND PART OF THE TALK:**

Q & A on the Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist, Baptism and Matrimony.

Hypothetical (absent proper and specific documentations) marriage cases were discussed

### **Canonical Reference for the Sacraments:**

BOOK IV. FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH (Cann. 834 - 848)

PART I. THE SACRAMENTS

#### **TITLE I. BAPTISM** (Cann. 849 - 878)

CHAPTER I. THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

CHAPTER II. THE MINISTER OF BAPTISM

CHAPTER III. THOSE TO BE BAPTIZED

CHAPTER IV. SPONSORS

CHAPTER V. THE PROOF AND REGISTRATION OF THE CONFERRAL OF BAPTISM

#### **TITLE II. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION** (Cann. 879 - 896)

CHAPTER I. THE CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

CHAPTER II. THE MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

CHAPTER III. THOSE TO BE CONFIRMED

CHAPTER IV. SPONSORS

CHAPTER V. THE PROOF AND REGISTRATION OF THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION

#### **TITLE III. THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST** (Cann. 897 - 958)

CHAPTER I. THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

Art. 1. THE MINISTER OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

Art. 2. PARTICIPATION IN THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

Art. 3. THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

Art. 4. THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

CHAPTER II. THE RESERVATION AND VENERATION OF THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST

CHAPTER III. THE OFFERING GIVEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

**TITLE IV. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE** (Cann. 959 - 997)

CHAPTER I. THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

CHAPTER II. THE MINISTER OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

CHAPTER III. THE PENITENT

CHAPTER IV. INDULGENCES

**TITLE V. THE SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK** (Cann. 998 - 1007)

CHAPTER I. THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

CHAPTER II. THE MINISTER OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

CHAPTER III. THOSE ON WHOM THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK IS TO BE CONFERRED

**TITLE VI. ORDERS** (Cann. 1008 - 1054)

CHAPTER I. THE CELEBRATION AND MINISTER OF ORDINATION

CHAPTER II. THOSE TO BE ORDAINED

Art. 1. REQUIREMENTS IN THOSE TO BE ORDAINED

Art. 2. THE PREREQUISITES FOR ORDINATION

Art. 3. IRREGULARITIES AND OTHER IMPEDIMENTS

Art. 4. THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND INVESTIGATION

CHAPTER III. THE NOTATION AND TESTIMONIAL OF ORDINATION CONFERRED

**TITLE VII. MARRIAGE** (Cann. 1055 - 1165)

CHAPTER I. PASTORAL CARE AND THOSE THINGS WHICH MUST PRECEDE THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

CHAPTER II. DIRIMENT IMPEDIMENTS IN GENERAL

CHAPTER III. SPECIFIC DIRIMENT IMPEDIMENTS

CHAPTER IV. MATRIMONIAL CONSENT

CHAPTER V. THE FORM OF THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

CHAPTER VI. MIXED MARRIAGES

CHAPTER VII. MARRIAGE CELEBRATED SECRETLY

CHAPTER VIII. THE EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE

CHAPTER IX. THE SEPARATION OF SPOUSES

Art. 1. DISSOLUTION OF THE BOND

Art. 2. SEPARATION WITH THE BOND REMAINING

CHAPTER X. THE CONVALIDATION OF MARRIAGE

Art. 1. SIMPLE CONVALIDATION

Art. 2. RADICAL SANATION

**Matter and Form needed for a VALID celebration of sacrament:**

For **Baptism**, **matter** is the natural water that is poured on the head of the person or water in which a person may be immersed. The **form** is “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

For **Confirmation**, **matter** is the imposition of hands and anointing with chrism. The **form** is “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

For **Eucharist**, **matter** is wheat bread and natural grape wine. The **form** is the Institution Narrative spoken by the priest that recalls the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper.

*At the time he was betrayed and entered willingly into his Passion, he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU. In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying: TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.*

For **Reconciliation**, **matter** is understood as remote and proximate. The **remote matter** consists of sins committed after baptism, which have not been previously confessed whereas the **proximate matter** consists of contrition, confession, and penance. The **form** is (absolution) “God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son, has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace. And I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

For the **Anointing of the Sick**, **matter** is anointing with the Oil of the Sick. The **form** is “Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin, save you, and raise you up.”

For **Holy Orders**, **matter** is the imposition of hands whereas the **form** requires adherence to the prayer of consecration for each order (bishop, priest, or deacon).

For **Marriage**, **matter** and **form** involve the free exchange of **consent** between the bride and groom. In the United States, couples speak these words to one another: “I (name) take you (name) to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”