

- Matthew 1:18-19 Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a just (or righteous) man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly.
- Psalm 19: The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are true, all of them just.
- Per Oxford English Dictionary, JUST means based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair... behaving in accord with moral law.
- The Moral Law is the work of Divine Wisdom.
 - Fatherly instruction.
 - Sets the rules of conduct that lead to beatitude; true happiness.
 - Shuns the ways of evil that turn man away from God and his love.
 - Based on four kinds of law: Natural law, the Law of Desire, the Old Law, and the Law of Christ.
 - CCC 1949-1986
- What is Natural Law?
 - It is NOT what comes naturally!
 - Natural law is the objective order of things.
 - The original moral sense to discern by reason good and evil, truth and lie.
 - The message of creation, written on everyone's heart.
 - Determines what is required to thrive and flourish, and where you'll find true happiness.
 - Creation tells us a story that's bigger than science.
- The Apple Tree
 - FORM (its essence)
 - NATURE (its principle of action)
 - END (its reason for being)?
 - There are things we can do, based on the tree's nature and end, which are both good and bad for the tree.
 - If an apple tree has an end, a purpose, then so much more a human person
- A human person has Form, Nature, End
 - A human person is an individual substance with a rational nature.
 - Its nature and end lead to the the Silver Rule: don't do to others what you don't want done to yourself. Exists across all cultures and peoples.
 - Having a soul makes a difference! Our recognition of beauty, truth, justice, and love sets us apart.
 - Aristotle, 2300 years ago said true happiness is found in a life of virtue!
- Male Female
 - Reason alone says survival of our species requires male and female anatomy.
 - God made us male and female, different forms, different in each and every cell.
- Natural Law Application
 - The Church claims authority on Natural Law because it's part of the Moral Law.
 - The Catechism makes many explicit references to Natural Law, especially regarding government and civil law, homosexuality, marriage, and divorce.
 - If Natural Law says human persons are intrinsically ordered for male-female sexual relations, then it's reasonable to say same-sex relations are "intrinsically disordered." (CCC 2357)
 - Teaching on transgenderism likewise leans on Natural Law.
 - This in no way subtracts from the respect, compassion, and sensitivity deserving of all persons.

- Natural Law Disclaimer
 - Requires intellectual gifts
 - Requires significant time to reach conclusions.
 - Easy to take wrong turns.
- Law of Desire
 - The message of God has been obscured.
 - The message of the world has been obscured.
 - There is a kind of counter-current in the world through sin.
 - While nature expresses the inner message of creation, man builds his own world that introduces opposite trends.
 - Romans 7:15-17 "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me."
- The Old Law
 - The first 5 books of the Bible, the Torah.
 - Israel's framework for living, its order of prayer, its moral order
 - A strong current of Natural Law, best exemplified by the last seven Commandments
 - It tells you what exactly you need to do or not do, mostly by pointing out sin.
 - Doesn't allow for human freedom.
- The Law of Christ
 - Contained in the "new commandment" of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us.
 - Source of the Golden Rule, "do unto others as you'd have them do unto you."
 - The Law of Christ is a law of freedom, because it sets us free from the ritual and juridical observances of the Old Law, and inclines us to act spontaneously out of charity
 - Ezekiel 36:25-27 I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees.
- Magisterium
 - The teaching authority of the Church.
 - Necessary because of new philosophies, forms of government, economic theories, and technologies, bringing new challenges in Moral Law.
 - If in any doubt about any Church teaching on the moral law, read the source documents.
 - Start with the Catechism, and use the footnotes to find where the teaching is rooted.
 - Go to CATHOLIC.COM
 - See a member of the clergy or a trusted parishioner. Be open-minded!
- References
 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana, *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd Ed.*
 - Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) and Peter Seewald, *God and the World: A Conversation With Peter Seewald*
 - Most Rev. Michael F. Burbidge, *A Catechesis on the Human Person and Gender Ideology.* <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/bishop/public-messages/2021/a-catechesis-on-the-human-person-and-gender-ideology/>
 - Sacred Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith, *Persona Humana: Declaration On Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics.* https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona-humana_en.html
 - Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae.* https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html
 - Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>