

# Moral Living Expectations in Catholicism

## 1. Love God and Love Your Neighbor

Jesus taught that the greatest commandments are to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40). This love is the foundation of Christian morality and influences how we treat others with kindness, respect, and justice.

## 2. Follow the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21)

The Ten Commandments guide our relationship with God and others:

1. Worship God alone.
2. Do not take God's name in vain.
3. Keep the Lord's Day holy (attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days).
4. Honor your parents.
5. Do not kill (respect life from conception to natural death).
6. Do not commit adultery (practice chastity and respect the dignity of marriage).
7. Do not steal (act justly and ethically in material matters).
8. Do not bear false witness (speak truthfully and avoid gossip).
9. Do not covet your neighbor's spouse (guard your heart from lust and infidelity).
10. Do not covet your neighbor's goods (avoid envy and materialism).

## 3. Worship God Alone

The First Commandment calls us to worship and trust in God alone. Catholics must reject all forms of superstition, divination, and occult practices, which seek spiritual power or knowledge apart from God (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

This includes practices such as:

- Witchcraft, spells, curses, and magic
- Ouija boards and attempts to communicate with spirits
- Tarot cards, psychic readings, séances, and fortune-telling, horoscopes, astrology, and zodiac practices
- Crystals, energy healing, or other objects used for spiritual power or protection apart from God
- Santería, brujería, limpias (including limpias con huevo), Santa Muerte devotion
- Treating saints, sacramentals, or religious objects as sources of supernatural power instead of trusting in God

Catholics are called to place their trust in Jesus Christ through prayer, the sacraments, Sacred Scripture, and the intercession of the saints.

## 4. The Five Precepts of the Church

The Five Precepts of the Church outline the minimum obligations required to maintain a faithful Catholic life:

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (Hebrews 10:25).
2. Confess your sins at least once a year (John 20:22-23).
3. Receive the Eucharist at least once during the Easter season (John 6:53-58).
4. Observe days of fasting and abstinence (Matthew 6:16-18).
5. Provide for the needs of the Church (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

## 5. Follow the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

Jesus gave the Beatitudes as a way to live a blessed and holy life. They call us to be humble, merciful, pure of heart, and peacemakers, even when facing difficulties.

## 6. Live a Life of Virtue

Faith, Hope, and Charity (Love) – These are the theological virtues that connect us to God (1 Corinthians 13:13).  
Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance – These are the cardinal virtues that guide our moral choices.

## 7. Respect the Sanctity of Life and Human Dignity

Every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). We are called to defend life from conception to natural death and care for the poor, sick, and vulnerable (Matthew 25:31-46).

## 8. Respect Legitimate Civil Authority and Obey Just Laws

Christians are called to respect legitimate civil authorities, obey just laws, fulfill their civic duties, and contribute to the common good (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; CCC 2238-2240). Deliberately breaking a just law without a serious or morally justified reason can be morally wrong.

However, obedience to civil authority is not absolute. If a law or directive contradicts God's law, the moral order, fundamental human rights, or the Gospel, Christians must follow God rather than participate in wrongdoing: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29; CCC 2242).

## 9. Live a Pure and Chaste Life

Sex is only for marriage – The Church teaches that sexual intimacy is a sacred gift meant for the lifelong commitment of marriage (Genesis 2:24, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Avoid pornography and lust – These distort the dignity of human love and lead to sinful desires (Matthew 5:27-28). Respect your body and others' dignity – Chastity calls us to dress modestly, act with purity, and avoid temptations that lead to sin (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

## 10. Stay Away from Substance Abuse and Drunkenness

Avoid drugs and excessive drinking – The Church teaches that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and we should not harm them with excessive alcohol, drug abuse, or other harmful substances (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Drunkenness is a sin – Drinking alcohol in moderation is permitted for adults of legal drinking age, but excessive drinking that leads to loss of self-control, recklessness, or harm to oneself or others is sinful (Ephesians 5:18). Underage drinking violates legitimate civil law and may also involve other moral concerns, including disobedience, dishonesty, harm to oneself or others, and placing others at risk. Drug use is sinful – It damages the body, impairs judgment, and can lead to addiction and destructive behavior (Galatians 5:19-21).

## 11. Participate in the Sacraments

The sacraments strengthen us to live a moral life. Baptism washes away sin, and the Eucharist nourishes our souls. Confession allows us to seek God's mercy when we fall (John 20:22-23).

## 12. Care for the Poor and Needy

We are called to serve those in need, following Jesus' example of compassion (Luke 6:38, James 1:27). Acts of charity and justice are central to Christian life.

## 13. Pray and Seek Holiness Daily

Developing a strong prayer life, reading Scripture, and staying close to God will help in making moral choices and growing in faith (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

## 14. Marriage and Family Responsibilities

Catholics are expected to marry within the Church – Marriage is a sacrament, and Catholics should seek to marry a fellow Catholic or obtain permission for a mixed marriage, ensuring that their union is guided by the faith (Mark 10:6-9). Couples should remain open to life – The Church teaches that artificial contraception is wrong and that couples should be open to children as part of God's plan (Psalm 127:3, Humanae Vitae).

Parents must raise their children in the Catholic faith – This includes having them baptized, teaching them to pray, ensuring they receive the sacraments, and providing a Christian example in daily life (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Proverbs 22:6).