

# Just Man-Made Rules?

by Sebastian R Fama

Whenever someone does not like a Catholic teaching or precept, you might hear them say: "That is just a man-made rule," or, "Jesus never said that." The idea being, if Jesus did not explicitly say something, it can be ignored. But this was never meant to be the case. We know that because it contradicts the words of Jesus himself. In Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus gives the Church the power to legislate and guarantees the gates of hell shall not prevail over it:

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

In Luke 10:16, Jesus tells his apostles, whoever rejects them rejects him:

He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects the one who sent me.

John tells us in 1 John 4:6, that those who know God listen to the Church:

We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Acts 15:28 tells us that the official acts of the Church (Council of Jerusalem) are acts of the Holy Spirit:

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things ...

Finally, in Matthew 18:17-18, Jesus says that whoever refuses to listen to the Church, is to be cast out:

If he refuses to listen even to the Church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The Church's authority is God's authority. Yes, churchmen are all sinners. But God chooses to use them anyway. The Scribes and Pharisees were notorious sinners. And yet, Jesus validates their God given authority in Matthew 23:1-3:

Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so, practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach but do not practice."

If Jesus had no problem recognizing the authority of the men who wanted him dead, we should have no problem recognizing the authority of the sinful men he has called to run his Church. So, when the Church officially teaches something, imagine that Jesus is saying it, because it carries the same weight.