

CANON LAW AND THE (CATHOLIC) LAWYER: A FISH OUT OF WATER?

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What do civil lawyers need to know about canon law? And how do civil law and canon law interact? Those two questions are important in today's society, where there is a constant interaction between civil law and canon law, and where civil lawyers often use canon lawyers to explain certain aspects of the Church's life, in particular when it comes to structures and the law. After some introductory remarks on canon law and comparative law, the conference will focus on some select current canonical issues in the Church today that are of importance to civil lawyers. A first topic is the consolidation of parishes. The canonical requirements are different from the civil law interests, however, canon law and civil law must work together to bring these operations to a good end. In passing, the topic of hierarchical recourse will be addressed. Maintaining Catholic identity of our institutions is another challenge of our times and is the second topic. How do we guarantee the Catholic identity of hospitals, schools, etc., when the religious have left and lay people take over? The focus of the third topic will be on temporal goods, ecclesiastical goods, civil law and alienation. Last but not least, the challenges of the sexual abuse crisis will be briefly addressed. The conference will end with some reflections on the current legal culture in the Church.