

Here's a comparison table showing how the **Early Church**, **Catholic Church**, and **Protestant Churches** (divided into Conservative and Mainline where relevant) align on key moral and doctrinal issues.

Doctrinal & Moral Comparison: Early Church vs. Catholic vs. Protestant

Issue	Early Church Fathers	Catholic Church	Conservative Protestants	Mainline Protestants
Authority	Scripture + Tradition; strong role of bishops and councils	Scripture + Sacred Tradition; Magisterium	<i>Sola Scriptura</i> ; reject apostolic succession	<i>Sola Scriptura</i> , often more loosely applied; may embrace modern interpretations
Church Unity	One visible, apostolic Church; schism condemned	Upholds visible unity through apostolic succession and the Papacy	Do not accept Papacy; see unity as spiritual not institutional	Similar; often ecumenical but tolerate denominational plurality
Divorce & Remarriage	Strongly discouraged; remarriage seen as adultery	Divorce not recognized; annulment possible in certain cases	Permitted in cases like adultery or abandonment; remarriage allowed	Permissive; often allow for pastoral exceptions
Abortion	Universally condemned as murder (e.g., <i>Didache</i> , Tertullian)	Condemned as intrinsically evil; never morally permissible	Strongly opposed; many are pro-life activists	More divided; some support legal access with restrictions or exceptions
Same-Sex Marriage / Acts	Condemned based on natural law and Scripture	Same-sex acts are sinful; marriage only between man and woman	Same-sex marriage rejected; call to chastity	Affirming of same-sex relationships and marriage in many cases
Contraception	Rejected; seen as contrary to natural law and openness to life	Still officially rejected (e.g., <i>Humanae Vitae</i>)	Accepted, especially since the 20th century	Widely accepted and supported
Baptism	Seen as necessary for salvation; infant baptism common	Infant baptism; regenerative; necessary for salvation	Varies (infant or believer's); usually symbolic for salvation	Same; more symbolic emphasis; some question necessity

Issue	Early Church Fathers	Catholic Church	Conservative Protestants	Mainline Protestants
Eucharist	Real presence of Christ emphasized; seen as a sacrifice	Transubstantiation; Real Presence; central to worship	Symbolic or spiritual presence; varies widely	Often symbolic; liturgical meaning varies by denomination

✓ Key Takeaways:

- **Catholic Church:** Maintains the **strongest continuity** with early Church teaching on **moral issues, sacraments, and authority**.
- **Conservative Protestants:** Align on some moral issues (abortion, marriage), but differ significantly in **ecclesiology and sacraments**.
- **Mainline Protestants:** Often diverge most from early Church teachings, especially on **sexual ethics, abortion, and authority**.

Would you like sources or quotes from early Church Fathers on any of these topics for deeper comparison?