



Class One

Moral Teachings of the Church



Opening Prayer

Deut. 6:1-9

Deut 6:1-9

6:1 "These then are the commandments, the statutes and decrees which the LORD, your God, has ordered that you be taught to observe in the land into which you are crossing for conquest,

6:2 so that you and your son and your grandson may fear the LORD, your God, and keep, throughout the days of your lives, all his statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you, and thus have long life.

6:3 Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe them, that you may grow and prosper the more, in keeping with the promise of the LORD, the God of your fathers, to give you a land flowing with milk and honey.

The Great Commandment.

6:4 * "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone!

6:5 Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6:6 Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today.

6:7 Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest.

6:8 * Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead.

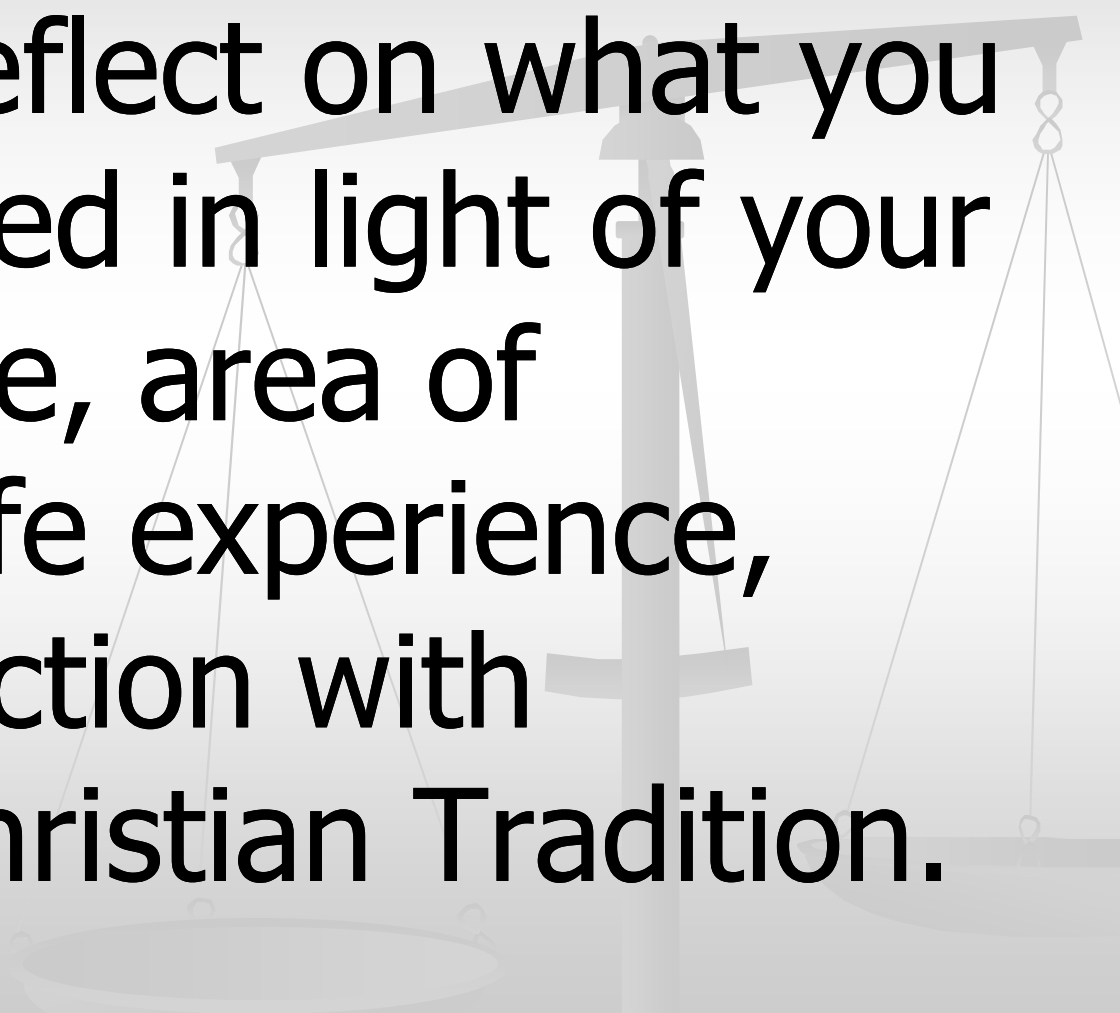
6:9 Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.



Objectives

Objectives

- Be able to explain the difference between Christian morality and societal morality.
- Recognize the role of virtues and the Holy Spirit in the moral life.

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- Critically reflect on what you have learned in light of your own culture, area of ministry, life experience, and connection with Catholic Christian Tradition.



Exercise 1



What does it mean to be a
Christian who in his/her life
is attempting to live as
Jesus did?



Societal Morality and the Church

A faint, light gray background image of a balance scale. The scale is positioned on the right side of the slide, with its vertical post and horizontal beam extending across the middle. Two pans are suspended from the beam by thin lines. The scale is slightly tilted, with the right pan being lower than the left. The overall image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible over it.

Societal Morality and the Church

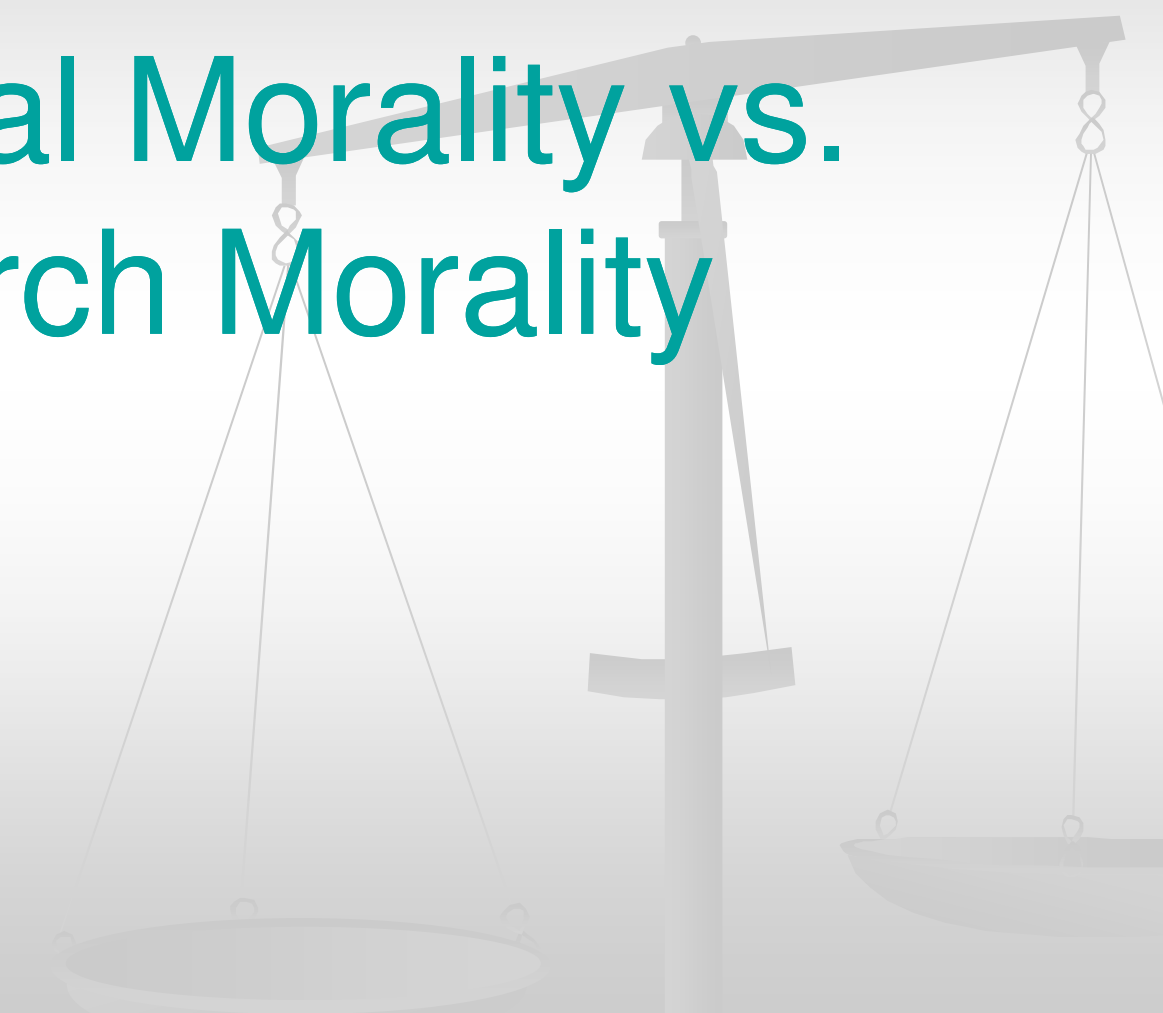
- How can we define morality?
- Morality can be defined in various ways:
 - Right or wrong decisions based on either universal laws (i.e. ten commandments) or on personal preference.
 - Choosing good or evil

Societal Morality and the Church

- Other examples
- St. Augustine had a broad definition of morality:
 - What a man ought to do to be happy...
 - Particular good (particular types of happiness)
 - Family, friends, success, money, sexual relationships, etc.
 - A particular happiness can never be a ultimate happiness.
 - Ultimate Good (ultimate happiness)
 - The ultimate happiness, goal, and purpose in our lives is God.

Societal Morality and the Church

- St. Augustine states that when we make a particular good (happiness) and ultimate good, we have made that particular good our God. This is called sin.
- John Paul II states that to be fully human one must live in relationship to God, doing God's will. *Veritatis Splendor*, JPII



Societal Morality vs. Church Morality

Societal Morality and the Church

- Societal morality
 - based on norms and mores of a culture
 - can be unwritten
 - can be unjust
- Church morality
 - Based on natural law and Scripture

Societal Morality and the Church

- Natural Law - is the knowledge of good and evil written on every heart.
 - Do good, avoid evil
 - Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1956

JER 31:33 But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Societal Morality and the Church

- Scripture
 - OLD LAW – Old Testament
 - CCC 1962 "...God wrote on the tablets of the Law what men did not read in their hearts ."
 - Ten Commandments - the Decalogue
 - Deut 5:6-21

Societal Morality and the Church

- New Law – New Testament
 - CCC 1965

“The New Law or the Law of the Gospel is the perfection here on earth of the divine law, natural and revealed. It is the work of Christ and is expressed particularly in the Sermon on the Mount. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit and through him it becomes the interior law of charity ...”

Societal Morality and the Church

- Sermon on the Mount
 - “The Law of the Gospel “fulfills,” refines, surpasses, and leads the Old Law to its perfection.” CCC 1967
 - Beautifully illustrated in the Sermon on the Mount - **Matthew 5:1-48**

Societal Morality and the Church

- Jesus is the model for moral living
 - Not only is the Father revealed to us through Jesus but he is an example for how we are to live our lives.

Societal Morality and the Church

- The role of the Magisterium in moral life
 - “Revelation teaches that the power to decide what is good and what is evil does not belong to man, but to God alone.” (VS, no.35)
- Magisterium (CCC, 2033)
 - Catechesis
 - Preaching
 - With the help of theologians and spiritual authors.

Societal Morality and the Church

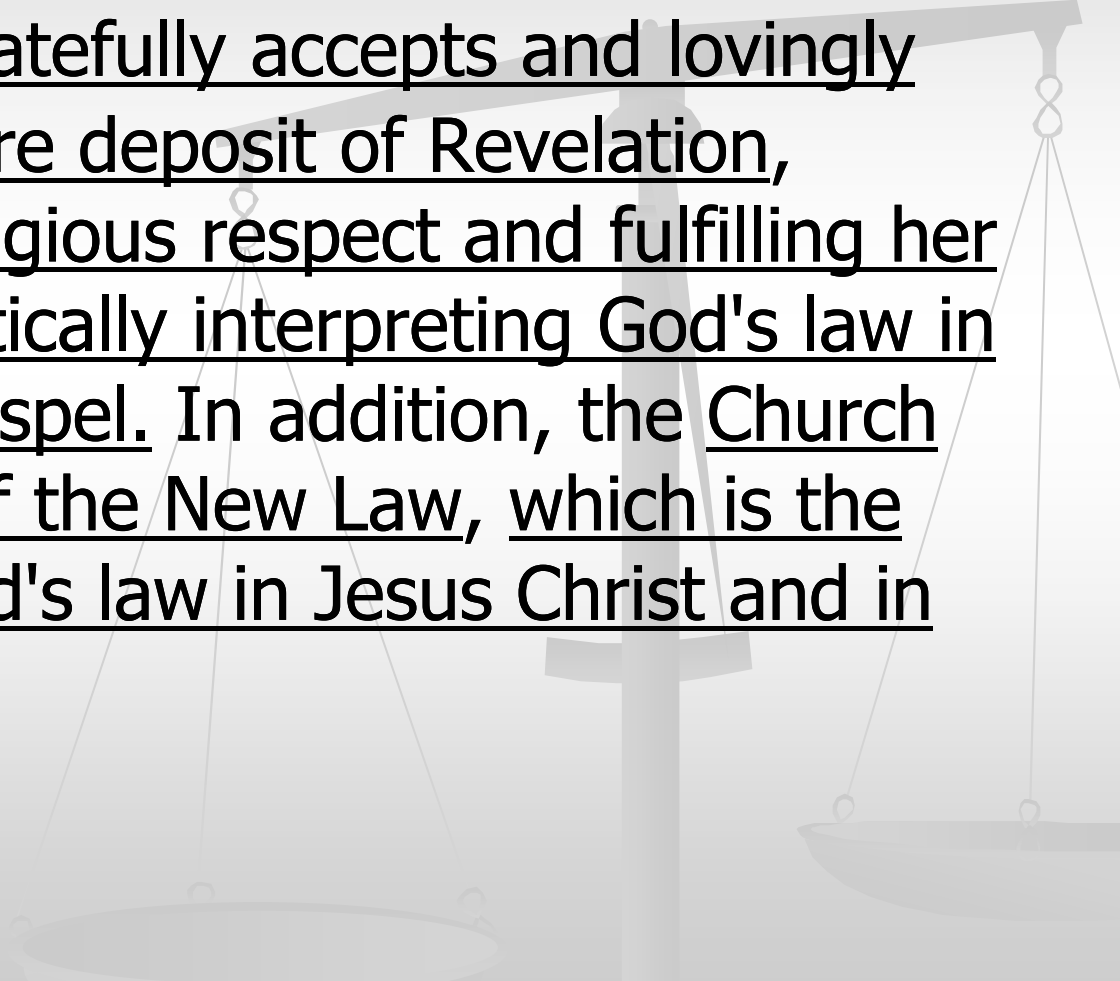
“Thus from generation to generation, under the aegis and vigilance of the pastors, the ‘deposit’ of Christian moral teaching has been handed on, a deposit composed of a characteristic body of rules, commandments, and virtues proceeding from faith in Christ and animated by charity.” (CCC, 2033)

Societal Morality and the Church

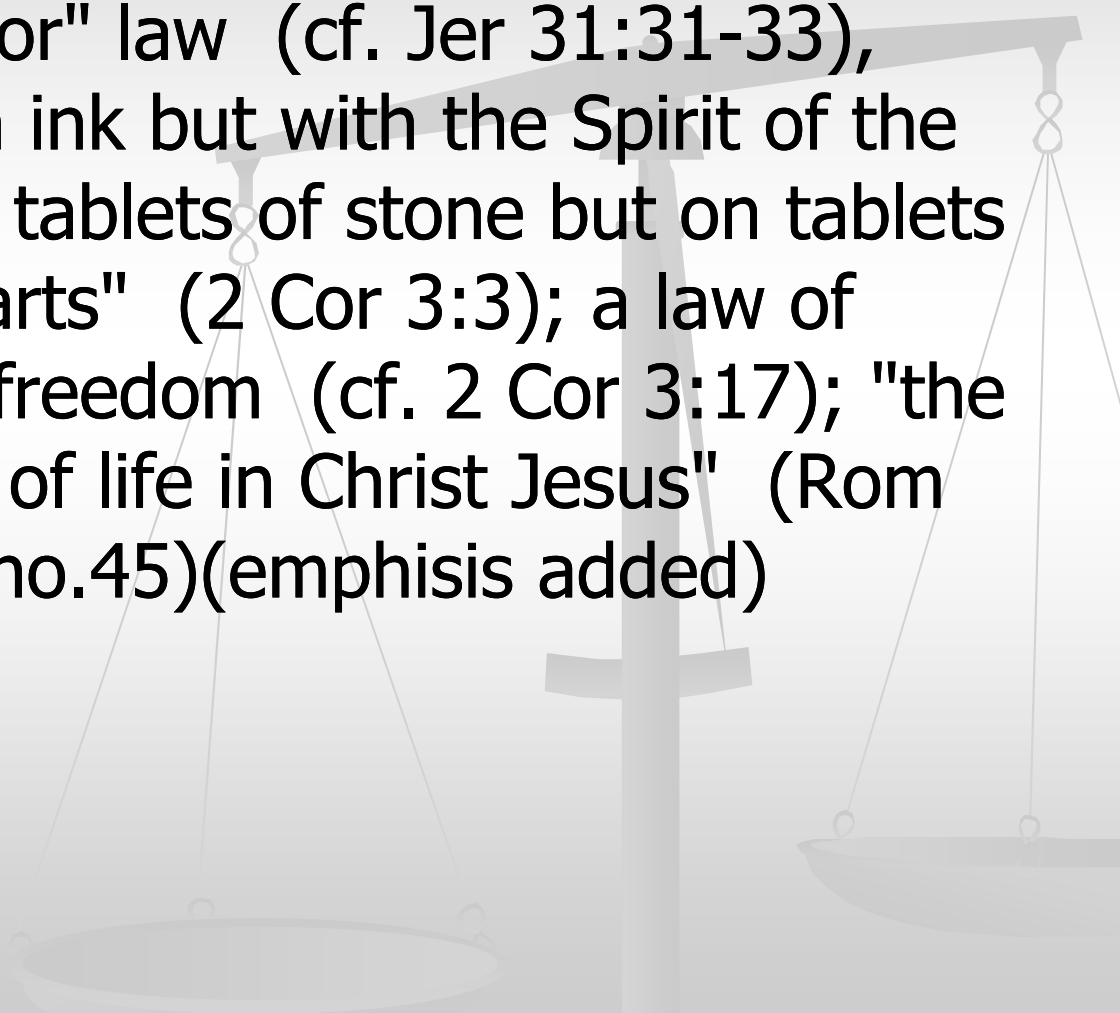
**“The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are ‘authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and put into practice.’”
(CCC, 2034)**

(CCC, 2049)

“The Magisterium of the Pastors of the Church in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, on the basis of the Decalogue which states the principle of moral life valid for every man.”



The Church gratefully accepts and lovingly preserves the entire deposit of Revelation, treating it with religious respect and fulfilling her mission of authentically interpreting God's law in the light of the Gospel. In addition, the Church receives the gift of the New Law, which is the "fulfillment" of God's law in Jesus Christ and in his Spirit.



This is an "interior" law (cf. Jer 31:31-33),
"written not with ink but with the Spirit of the
living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets
of human hearts" (2 Cor 3:3); a law of
perfection and of freedom (cf. 2 Cor 3:17); "the
law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom
8:2). (VS, no.45)(emphasis added)

Influences on Living a Moral Life

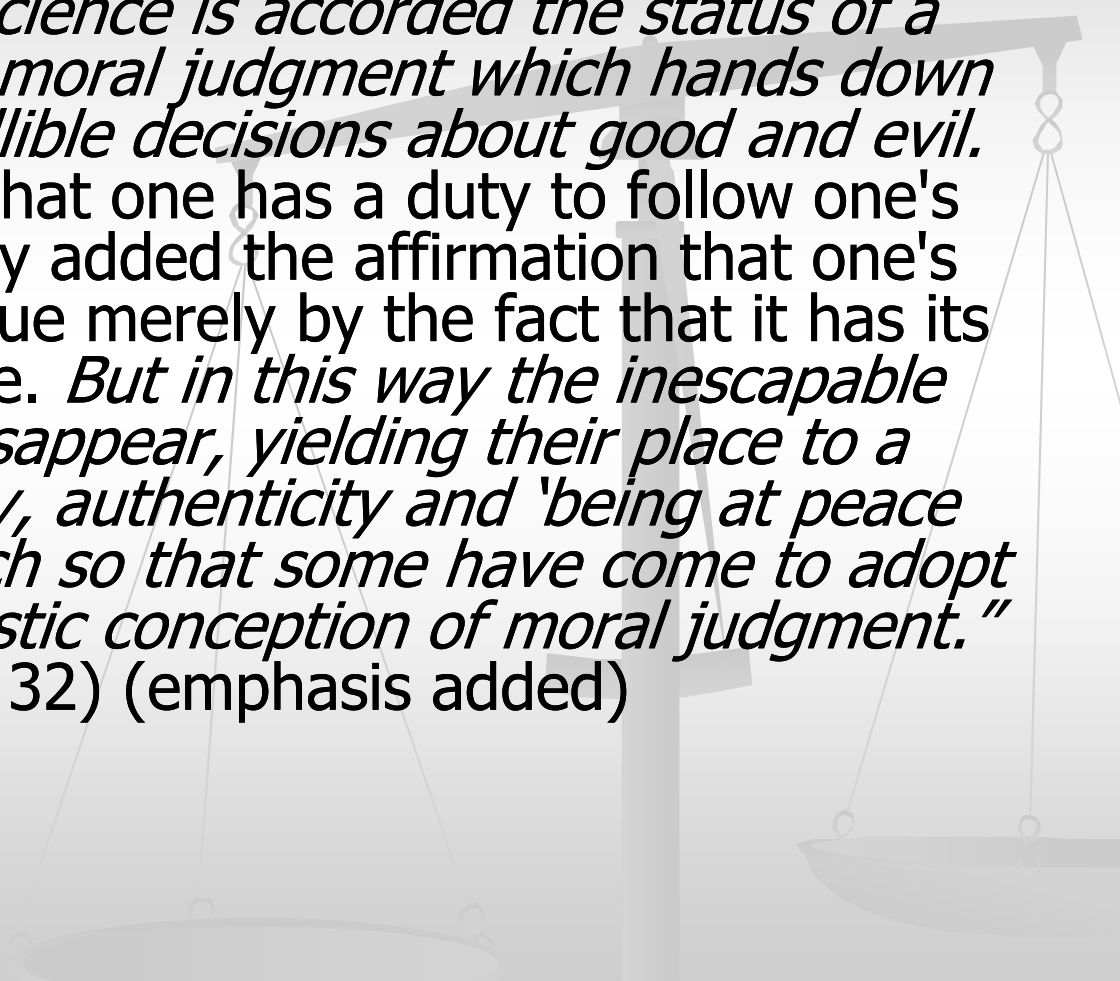
1. Family

- “In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father’s work of creation.” (CCC, 2205)
- “The family is the *original cell of social life...* The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, being to honor God, and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society.” (CCC, 2207) (emphasis original)

Influences on Living a Moral Life

2. Society – individualism

- “1- a doctrine that the interests of the individual are our ought ot be ethically paramount; 2- The conception that all values, rights, and duties originate in individuals.” - Miriam-Webster Online.



“The individual conscience is accorded the status of a supreme tribunal of moral judgment which hands down categorical and infallible decisions about good and evil. To the affirmation that one has a duty to follow one's conscience is unduly added the affirmation that one's moral judgment is true merely by the fact that it has its origin in conscience. But in this way the inescapable claims of truth disappear, yielding their place to a criterion of sincerity, authenticity and 'being at peace with oneself,' so much so that some have come to adopt a radically subjectivistic conception of moral judgment.”
(VS, no 32) (emphasis added)

Influences on Living a Moral Life

3. Human/Faith development

- “To live, grow, and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the world of God;” (CCC, 162)
- Growth in understanding the faith
 - “- through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts’; it is particular ` theological research [which] deepens knowledge of revealed truth.”” (CCC, 94)



Morality of Human Acts

Human Act



What is a human act?

- “At the core of a human act is a free, self-determining choice, which as such is something spiritual which abides within the person, determining the very *being* of the person.” (Mays, William E. *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing. Huntington, IN. 2000. p. 48)

Human Acts

- Human acts have
 - Physical, observable components (Mays, 48)
 - They embody and carry out human choice (Mays, 48)

Structure of a Human Act



Morality of Human Acts

Structure of a Moral Act

There are three parts to morality and all three must be good to be morally good. All three must be moral for the act itself to be moral. The three are:

- 1) Object chosen
- 2) End in view or the intention
- 3) Circumstances of the action

bonum ex integra causa

A morally evil act results from the corruption of the object chosen, the end, or the circumstance.

Object



Object Chosen

- The object is end of an act
- It is what one chooses to do.
 - EX. “If I choose to lie, lying is the object of my act, I make myself *to be a liar*, no matter how I may want to describe myself to others or even to myself.” (Mays, p.50) (emphasis original)

The Objective Act Itself

- The moral object of an act
 - provides the basis upon which moral acts are distinguished from one another, good or bad: act of charity, self-defense, adultery, theft, or life-conservation.
 - is the specific kind of action or behavior chose, the moral status of which is independent of the person choosing.

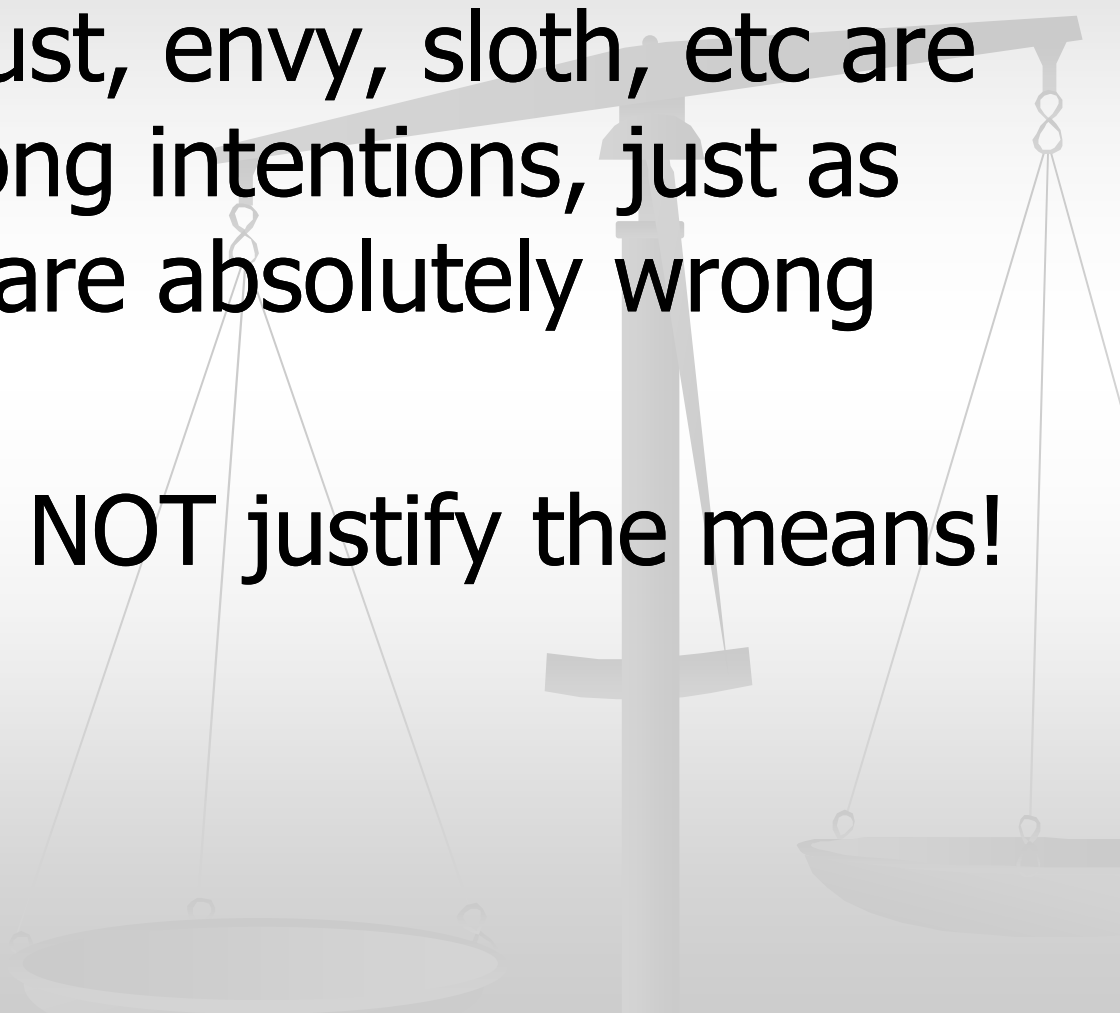
Intention



Intention, or End in View

■ Intention

- is dependent on the one acting.
- is the subjective aspect of morality.
- answers the question “why is this act being done?” We must always have good intentions, just as we must always do good things.

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- Hate, greed, lust, envy, sloth, etc are absolutely wrong intentions, just as theft, murder are absolutely wrong acts.
 - The END does NOT justify the means!

- **1752** (emphasis added)

- In contrast to the object, the *intention* resides in the acting subject. Because it lies at the voluntary source of an action and determines it by its end, **intention is an element essential to the moral evaluation of an action. The end is the first goal of the intention and indicates the purpose pursued in the action.** The intention is a movement of the will toward the end: it is concerned with the goal of the activity. It aims at the good anticipated from the action undertaken. Intention is not limited to directing individual actions, but can guide several actions toward one and the same purpose; it can orient one's whole life toward its ultimate end. **For example, a service done with the end of helping one's neighbor can at the same time be inspired by the love of God as the ultimate end of all our actions. One and the same action can also be inspired by several intentions, such as performing a service in order to obtain a favor or to boast about it.**

■ 1753

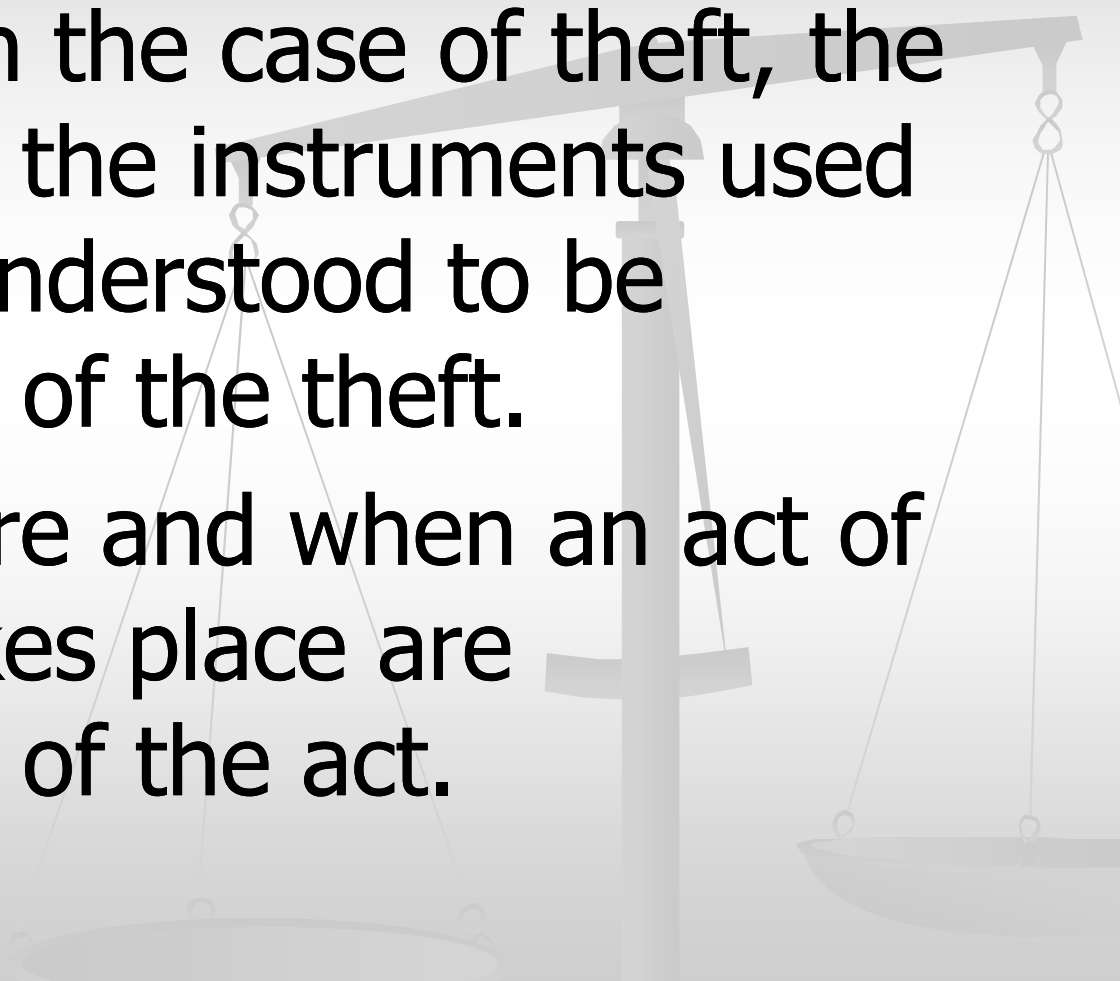
- A good intention (for example, that of helping one's neighbor) does not make behavior that is intrinsically disordered, such as lying and calumny, good or just. The end does not justify the means. Thus the condemnation of an innocent person cannot be justified as a legitimate means of saving the nation. On the other hand, an added bad intention (such as vainglory) makes an act evil that, in and of itself, can be good (such as almsgiving).[39](#)

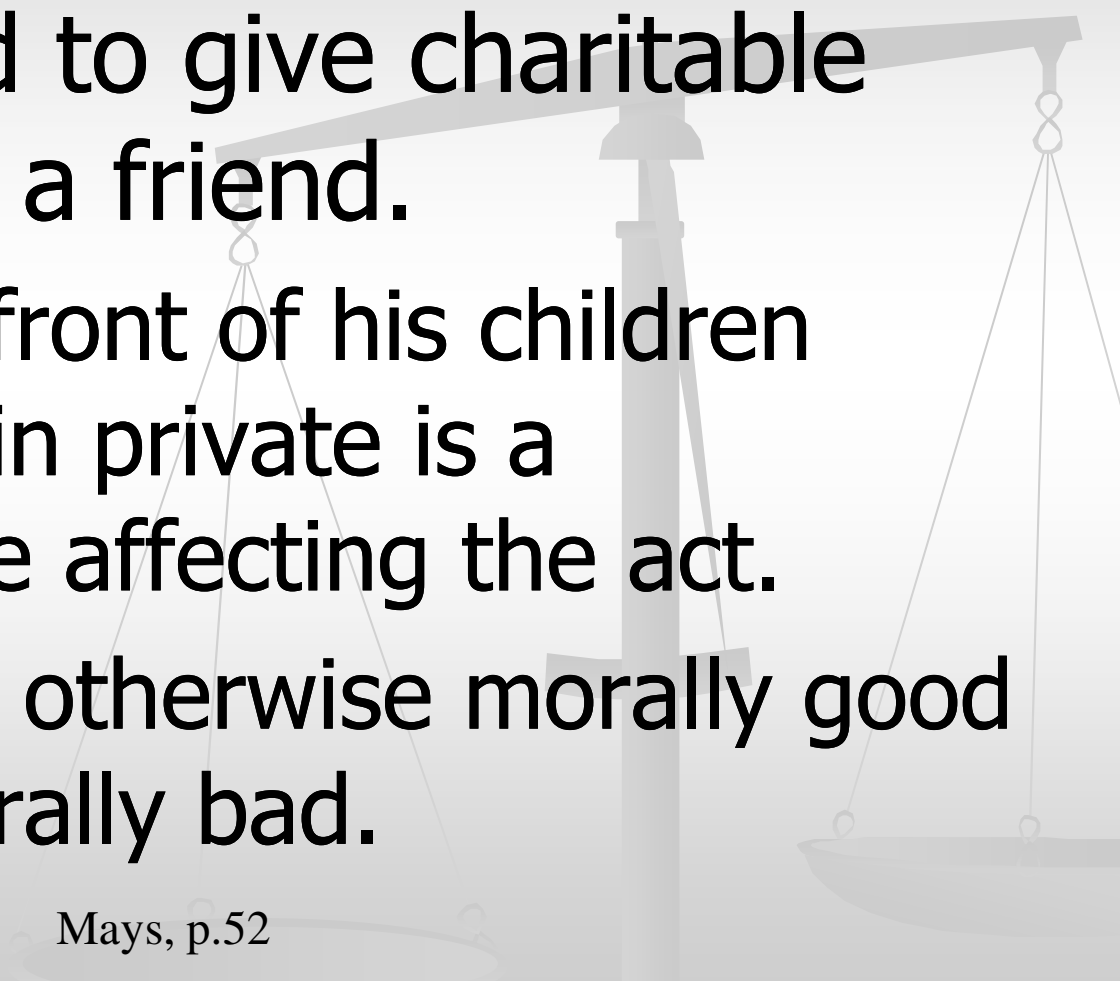
Circumstances



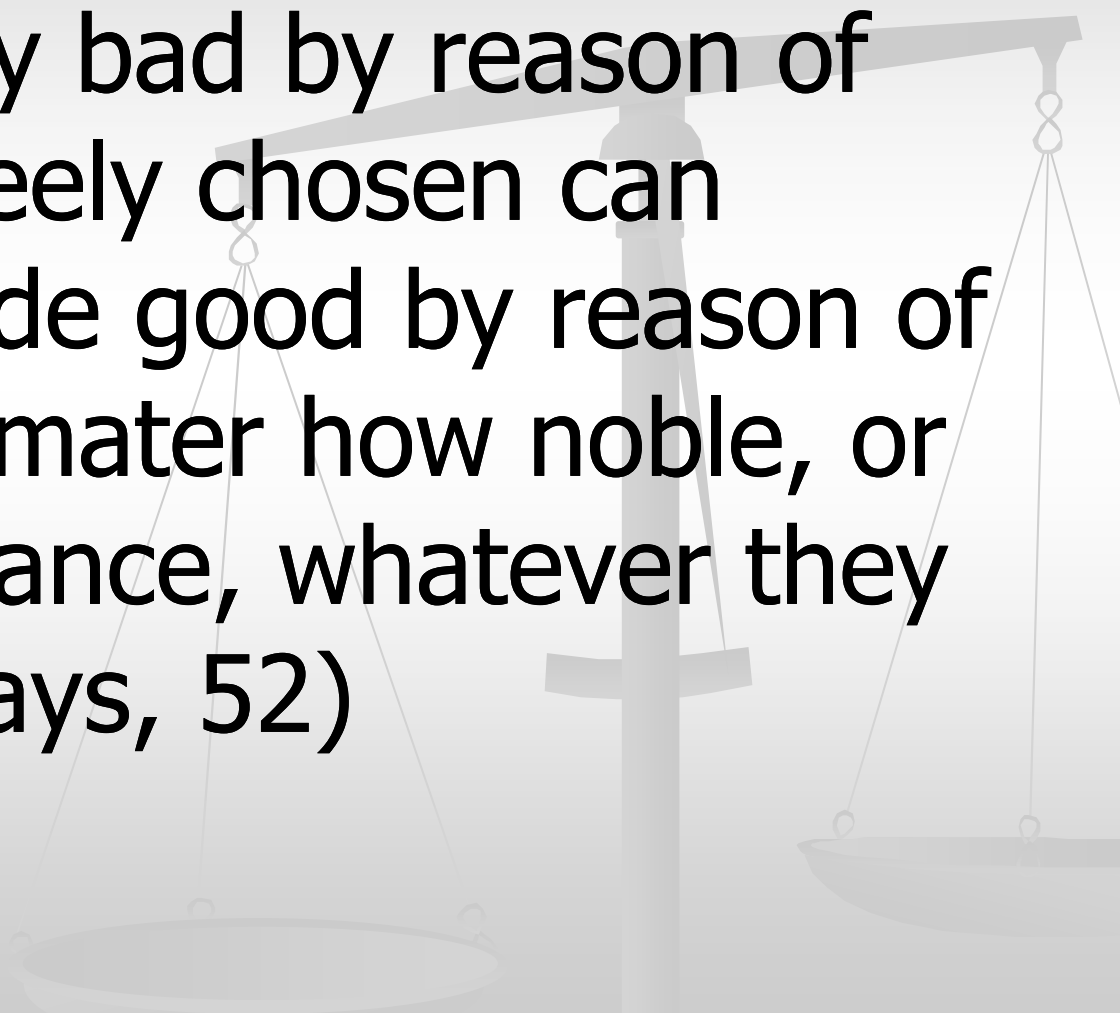
The Circumstances, or Situation

- Circumstances
 - include the manner in which the act is carried out; for example, the time, place, or instruments used.
 - are not part of the substance of the act. Only secondary in the evaluation of the act.
 - are constantly changing, and we have to discern on how to best apply the moral absolutes to relative situations.

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- For example in the case of theft, the time of day or the instruments used are properly understood to be circumstances of the theft.
 - Likewise, where and when an act of fornication takes place are circumstances of the act.

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- Ex. It is good to give charitable correction to a friend.
 - To do so in front of his children rather than in private is a circumstance affecting the act.
 - Turning one otherwise morally good into one morally bad.

Mays, p.52



“An act morally bad by reason of the object freely chosen can never be made good by reason of any end, no matter how noble, or any circumstance, whatever they may be.” (Mays, 52)



■ CCC 1754

- The *circumstances*, including the consequences, are secondary elements of a moral act. They contribute to increasing or diminishing the moral goodness or evil of human acts (for example, the amount of a theft). They can also diminish or increase the agent's responsibility (such as acting out of a fear of death). **Circumstances of themselves cannot change the moral quality of acts themselves; they can make neither good nor right an action that is in itself evil.**



- **CCC 1755**

- **A *morally good* act requires the goodness of the object, of the end, and of the circumstances together.** An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself (such as praying and fasting "in order to be seen by men").

The *object of the choice* can by itself vitiate an act in its entirety. There are some concrete acts—such as fornication—that it is always wrong to choose, because choosing them entails a disorder of the will, that is, a moral evil.

- **CCC 1756**

- It is therefore an error to judge the morality of human acts by considering only the intention that inspires them or the circumstances (environment, social pressure, duress or emergency, etc.) which supply their context. There are acts which, in and of themselves, independently of circumstances and intentions, are always gravely illicit by reason of their object; such as blasphemy and perjury, murder and adultery. **One may not do evil so that good may result from it.**



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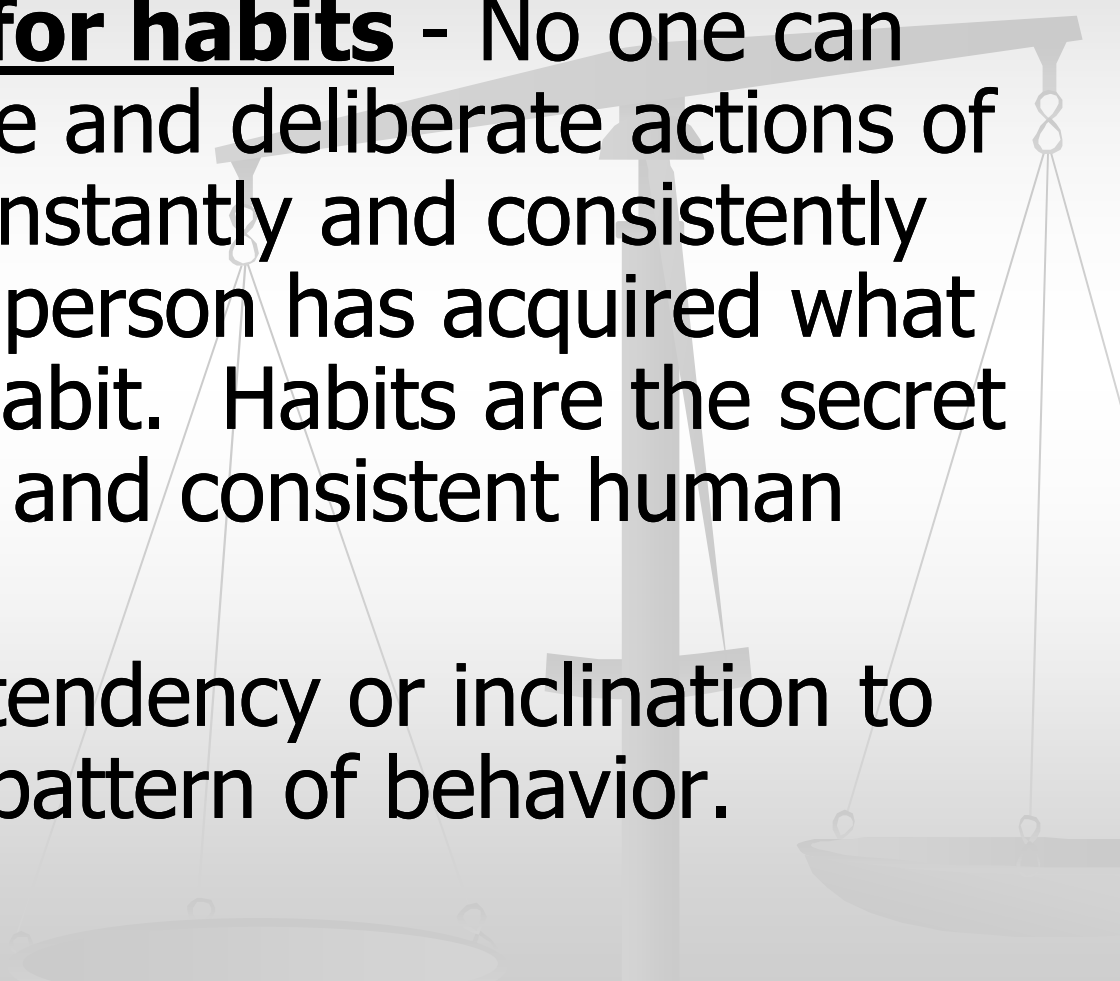
Habits and Virtues



Virtues and Habits

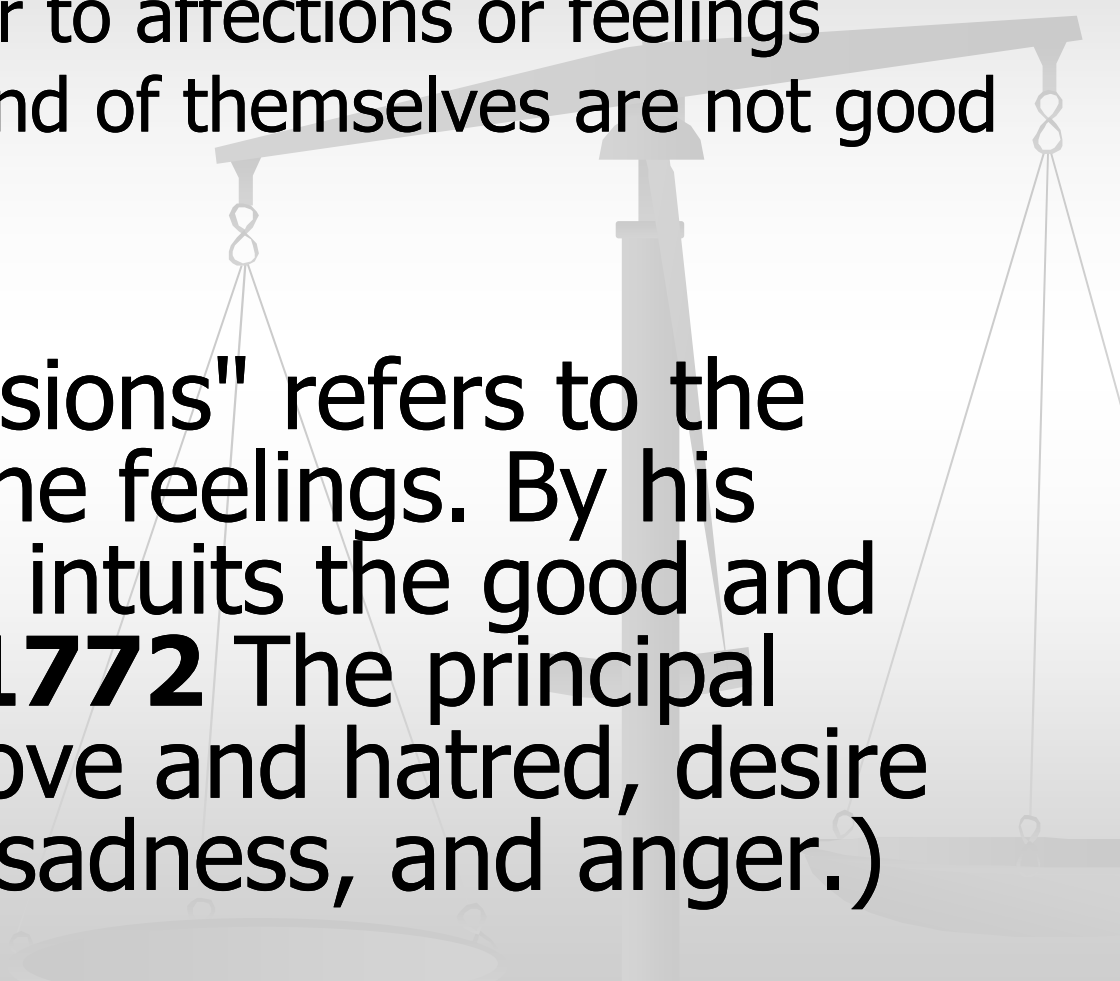


- The role of virtues in the moral life
 - A virtue “is a habitual and firm disposition to do good” CCC 1803

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- **The need for habits** - No one can perform free and deliberate actions of any kind constantly and consistently unless that person has acquired what are called habit. Habits are the secret to constant and consistent human activity.
 - **Habit** is a tendency or inclination to continue a pattern of behavior.

Virtues and Habits

- Human Virtues and the moral life
 - Firm attitude
 - stable disposition
 - habitual perfection of intellect and will
 - These virtues order human passions and guide conduct in reference to reason and faith.

- 
- Passions refer to affections or feelings
 - passions in and of themselves are not good or bad
 - **(CCC 1771)**
 - The term "passions" refers to the affections or the feelings. By his emotions man intuitively discerns the good and suspects evil. **1772** The principal passions are love and hatred, desire and fear, joy, sadness, and anger.)



Cardinal Virtues

Cardinal Virtues

- **Cardinal Virtues**
 - Cardinal translates to mean “to hinge”
 - The cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.



- Prudence (Catechism, #1806)

- **Prudence** is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; "the prudent man looks where he is going."
- Prudence is "right reason in action," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle. [67] It is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. It is called *auriga virtutum* (the charioteer of the virtues);

Cardinal Virtues

- Justice (Catechism, #1807)
 - **Justice** is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor.
 - Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good.

Cardinal Virtues

- Fortitude (Catechism, #1808)
 - **Fortitude** is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions.



Theological Virtues

Cardinal Virtues

- Temperance (Catechism, #1809)
 - **Temperance** is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable

Theological Virtues

- **Theological Virtues**
- Theological virtues are the Foundation of moral activity
- 1812 The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues, which adapt man's faculties for participation in the divine nature: [76] for the theological virtues relate directly to God. They dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. They have the One and Triune God for their origin, motive, and object.

Theological Virtues

- Faith (Catechism, 1814)
- **Faith** is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith "man freely commits his entire self to God." [78] For this reason the believer seeks to know and do God's will. "The righteous shall live by faith."

Theological Virtues

- Hope (Catechism, #1817)
- **Hope** is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."

Theological Virtues

- Charity (Catechism, 1822)
- **Charity** is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God



Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit

- The role of the Holy Spirit in the Moral Life
 - The moral life of the Christian is sustained by gifts of the holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit

- received at baptism
 - Isa 11:2 * The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, A spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,
- The Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord (wonder and awe)

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Wisdom: "to judge and order all things in accordance with divine norms and with a connaturality that flows from loving union with God."
- Understanding is a gift "to give a deeper insight and penetration of divine truths held by faith, not as a transitory enlightenment but as a permanent intuition."
- Counsel is "to render the individual docile and receptive to the counsel of God regarding one's actions in view of sanctification and salvation."

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Fortitude, a person is able "to overcome difficulties or to endure pain and suffering with the strength and power infused by God."
- Knowledge "to judge rightly concerning the truths of faith in accordance with their proper causes and the principles of revealed truth."
- Piety: "to give filial worship to God precisely as our Father and to relate with all people as children of the same Father."
- Gift of Fear of the Lord "to avoid sin and attachment to created things out of reverence and love of God."

(Aumann *Spiritual Theology*)

The End

