

Class 6: Social Morality

Social Morality

- “Love your neighbor as yourself”
 - We must accept responsibility for our life and that of others
 - 1931 “Respect for the human person proceeds by the way of respect for the principle that ‘everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as ‘another self,’ above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity.’”
 - 1932 “The duty of making oneself a neighbor to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be. ‘As you did it to one of the least of these brethren, you did it to me.’” Mt 25:40

Health/Salvation

- Health and salvation are related in the sense that each is seeks and is concerned with the good/well being of the person.
- To seek this good should be a goal of society

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- How can we create a healthy society?
 - CCC 1924
 - CCC 1925
 - CCC 1926

Forgiveness and healing

- Matt 18:21 * Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" 18:22 * Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times."
- Social morality: Called to love

Life Threatening Issues

Nuclear war

- *Gaudium et Spes (Church in the Modern World) 80 “ The development of armaments by modern science has immeasurable magnified the horrors and wickedness of war. Warfare conducted with these weapons can inflict immense and indiscriminate havoc which goes far beyond the bounds of legitimate defense. Indeed if the kings of weapons now stocked in the arsenals of the great powers were to be employed to the fullest, the result would be the almost complete reciprocal slaughter of one side by the other, not to speak of the widespread devastation that would follow in the world and the deadly after effects resulting from the use of such arms.”*

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Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord
August 6, 2004*

World War II liberated many and defeated tyranny but left as a shameful legacy instances of combat conducted without distinction between civilian and soldier. In the decades since the bombing, some have advanced the argument that despite the horrendous magnitude of civilian suffering, these actions can be justified by the efficient end of combat it effected. But secular ethicists and moral theologians alike echo the words of the Second Vatican Council: "Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."² The Church has a long tradition of condemning acts of war that bring "widespread, unspeakable suffering and destruction."³ At a time when much of the world is gripped by fear of terrorism and a few voices hint that the time may again come when the United States should call upon its nuclear arsenal to make "quick work" of frightening threats, it is fitting to reassert our commitment to disarmament and the conduct of limited war only as a last resort.

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/nwstatement.shtml>

Abortion CCC 2270-2275

2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.

From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.⁷¹

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.⁷²

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.⁷³

2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion.

This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.

Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.⁷⁴

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves.

Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.⁷⁵

2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense.

The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life.

"A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication latae sententiae,"⁷⁶ "by the very commission of the offense,"⁷⁷ and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law.⁷⁸

The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy.

Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority.

These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin.

Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death."⁷⁹

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law.

When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined....

As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights."⁸⁰

2274 Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

Prenatal diagnosis is morally licit, "if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safe guarding or healing as an individual....

It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence."81

2275 "One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival."82

"It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."83

"Certain attempts to influence chromosomic or genetic inheritance are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities.

Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity"84 which are unique and unrepeatable.

Euthanasia

- CCC 2276 – 2279

2276 Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

2277 Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons.
It is morally unacceptable.

Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.

The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment.

Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted.

The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted.

The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable

Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity.

As such it should be encouraged.

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- Starvation

Capital Punishment

- CCC 2266 - 2267
- 2266 The State's effort to contain the spread of behaviors injurious to human rights and the fundamental rules of civil coexistence corresponds to the requirement of watching over the common good. Legitimate public authority has the right and duty to inflict penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime. the primary scope of the penalty is to redress the disorder caused by the offense. When his punishment is voluntarily accepted by the offender, it takes on the value of expiation. Moreover, punishment, in addition to preserving public order and the safety of persons, has a medicinal scope: as far as possible it should contribute to the correction of the offender.⁶⁷
- offender 'today ... are very rare, if not practically non-existent.' [John Paul II, Evangelium vitae 56.]

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- 2267 The traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude, presupposing full ascertainment of the identity and responsibility of the offender, recourse to the death penalty, when this is the only practicable way to defend the lives of human beings effectively against the aggressor.

"If, instead, bloodless means are sufficient to defend against the aggressor and to protect the safety of persons, public authority should limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity to the dignity of the human person.

"Today, in fact, given the means at the State's disposal to effectively repress crime by rendering inoffensive the one who has committed it, without depriving him definitively of the possibility of redeeming himself, cases of absolute necessity for suppression of the

Life Diminishing Issues

Racism

- CCC 1934 – 1935

1934 Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity.

1935 The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it:

Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.40

U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979

- Source: www.usccb.org

- Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our Church. Despite apparent advances and even significant changes in the last two decades, the reality of racism remains. In large part it is only external appearances which have changed.

U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979

- This new economic crisis reveals an unresolved racism that permeates our society's structures and resides in the hearts of many among the majority. Because it is less blatant, this subtle form of racism is in some respects even more dangerous -- harder to combat and easier to ignore. Major segments of the population are being pushed to the margins of society in our nation. As economic pressures tighten, those people who are often black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian -- and always poor -- slip further into the unending cycle of poverty, deprivation, ignorance, disease, and crime. Racial identity is for them an iron curtain barring the way to a decent life and livelihood. The economic pressures exacerbate racism, particularly where poor white people are competing with minorities for limited job opportunities. The Church must not be unmindful of these economic pressures. We must be sensitive to the unfortunate and unnecessary racial tension that results from this kind of economic need.

U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979

- Mindful of its duty to be the advocate for those who hunger and thirst for justice's sake, the Church cannot remain silent about the racial injustices in society and its own structures. Our concern over racism follows, as well, from our strong commitment to evangelization. Pope John Paul II has defined evangelization as bringing consciences, both individual and social, into conformity with the Gospel.⁽³⁾ We would betray our commitment to evangelize ourselves and our society were we not to strongly voice our condemnation of attitudes and practices so contrary to the Gospel. Therefore, as the bishops of the United States, we once again address our pastoral reflections on racism to our brothers and sisters of all races.

U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979

- We do this, conscious of the fact that racism is only one form of discrimination that infects our society. Such discrimination belies both our civil and religious traditions. The United States of America rests on a constitutional heritage that recognizes the equality, dignity, and inalienable rights of all its citizens. Further, we are heirs of a religious teaching which proclaims that all men and women, as children of God, are brothers and sisters. Every form of discrimination against individuals and groups--whether because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, economic status, or national or cultural origin--is a serious injustice which has severely weakened our social fabric and deprived our country of the unique contributions of many of our citizens. While cognizant of these broader concerns, we wish to draw attention here to the particular form of discrimination that is based on race.

U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979

- Racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of races. It is the sin that makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights. It mocks the words of Jesus: "Treat others the way you would have them treat you." (4) Indeed, racism is more than a disregard for the words of Jesus; it is a denial of the truth of the dignity of each human being revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation.

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- In order to find the strength to overcome the evil of racism, we must look to Christ. In Christ Jesus "there does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or freedom, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus." (5) As Pope John Paul II has said so clearly, "Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is -- toward Christ our Redeemer, toward Christ the Redeemer of [humanity.]"(6) It is in Christ, then, that the Church finds the central cause for its commitment to justice, and to the struggle for the human rights and dignity of all persons.

- Prejudice

- CCC 1935

1935 The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it:

Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.40

Life Diminishing Issues

■ Political injustice

■ CCC 1930

- 1930 Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority: by flouting them, or refusing to recognize them in its positive legislation, a society undermines its own moral legitimacy.³⁶ If it does not respect them, authority can rely only on force or violence to obtain obedience from its subjects. It is the Church's role to remind men of good will of these rights and to distinguish them from unwarranted or false claims.

- Poverty

- CCC 2443-2454

2443 God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: "Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you"; "you received without pay, give without pay."231 It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones.232 When "the poor have the good news preached to them," it is the sign of Christ's presence.233

2444 "The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor.234 Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to "be able to give to those in need."235 It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty.236

2445 Love for the poor is incompatible with immoderate love of riches or their selfish use:

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you.237

2446 St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. the goods we possess are not ours, but theirs."238 "The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity":239

When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.240

2447 The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.241 Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. the corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead.242 Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God:243

He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none and he who has food must do likewise.244 But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.245 If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?246

2448 "In its various forms - material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death - human misery is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin. This misery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the least of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere."247

2449 Beginning with the Old Testament, all kinds of juridical measures (the jubilee year of forgiveness of debts, prohibition of loans at interest and the keeping of collateral, the obligation to tithe, the daily payment of the day-laborer, the right to glean vines and fields) answer the exhortation of Deuteronomy: "For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land.'"248 Jesus makes these words his own: "The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."249 In so doing he does not soften the vehemence of former oracles against "buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals . . .," but invites us to recognize his own presence in the poor who are his brethren:250

When her mother reproached her for caring for the poor and the sick at home, St. Rose of Lima said to her: "When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus. We must not fail to help our neighbors, because in them we serve Jesus."251

Life Diminishing Issues

■ Prostitution

■ CCC 2355

- 2355 Prostitution does injury to the dignity of the person who engages in it, reducing the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure. the one who pays sins gravely against himself: he violates the chastity to which his Baptism pledged him and defiles his body, the temple of the Holy Spirit. 139 Prostitution is a social scourge. It usually involves women, but also men, children, and adolescents (The latter two cases involve the added sin of scandal.). While it is always gravely sinful to engage in prostitution, the imputability of the offense can be attenuated by destitution, blackmail, or social pressure.

- Pornography

- CCC 2354

- 2354 Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials.

■ Sexism

- CCC 2334
- 2334 "In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity." 118 "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God." 119

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- We are called to have gratitude for the past, vigilance in the present, hope in the future.