

CHRISTIAN MORALITY: AN OVERVIEW

NATIVITY CATHOLIC CHURCH – FEBRUARY 3, 2021

MORALITY - a free and intelligent response to God to become good persons, to make right choices, and to engage in right actions; the science of what human beings ought to do by reason of who they are. Living a moral life makes us more like Christ and brings us lasting happiness.

LIFE IN CHRIST: LIVING TOWARD BEATITUDE – Matthew 5-7 and Romans 12-15

SIN IN CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Original Sin – deprivation of the original holiness given to the first human beings; a personal sin (choosing to prefer self to God) which was necessarily transmitted to all future generations

Concupiscence – inclination to commit sin as a result of the effects of original sin

Mortal Sin – an action so destructive that it mortally wounds our relationship with God

Conditions for Mortal Sin – Grave Matter, Knowledge of Sinfulness, and Freedom

Venial Sin – an action that turns us away from God in small degrees

WHAT CAN HELP US CHOOSE GOOD AND AVOID EVIL?

The Moral Law – Divine Wisdom; the rules of conduct that lead us to holiness

Natural Moral Law – written on the human heart, discernible by reason, set forth by God

The Ten Commandments (The Old Law) – revelation of God, foundation for moral life

The Law of the Love (The New Law) – lived and preached by Jesus Christ, especially in the Sermon on the Mount

Conscience – awareness of, and attentiveness to, the voice of God guiding our actions toward the good, the true, and the beautiful; formed through Scripture, the teachings of the Church, the witness and advice of others, prayer, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Virtues – Habits that lead us toward the good; can be developed through the spiritual life

Theological Virtues – Faith, Hope, Charity

Cardinal Virtues – Prudence, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude

Grace – God's unmerited gift to respond to his call and to conform our lives to his will

Sanctifying Grace – A habitual gift that perfects the soul; e.g., the grace of Baptism

Actual Grace – God's interventions at different points in our lives

Sacramental Grace – gifts proper to the different sacraments

Special graces or Charisms – gifts to be used for building up the Church

The Church

The Word of God – containing the teachings of the Law of Love

The Sacraments – the grace to sustain us along the way

The Example of Holiness – the model and witness of the saints

Discernment – the companionship of others striving for holiness

The Magisterium – the teaching authority of the Church, as ordained by Jesus Christ

HOW DO WE KNOW IF A PARTICULAR ACT IS GOOD OR EVIL?

Sources of Morality – how to determine if an act is moral (good) in God's eyes

Object – Of itself, is the action intrinsically good, intrinsically evil, or indeterminate?

Intention – Why am I doing this act? What is the goal of my action?

Circumstances – Are there any outside forces, emotions, people, or other things impacting my action?

Circumstances can increase or decrease our *responsibility* (culpability) for sin.

THE COMMANDMENTS

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS

“You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

- *Matthew 22.37-39*

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- I. I am the LORD, your God. You shall have no other gods before me.
- II. You shall not take the name of the LORD, your God in vain.
- III. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
- IV. You shall honor your father and your mother.
- V. You shall not kill.
- VI. You shall not commit adultery.
- VII. You shall not steal.
- VIII. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
- X. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

THE BEATITUDES

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

- *Matthew 5.2-12a*

THE UNIVERSAL PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
3. You shall receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter Season.
4. You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.
5. You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.