MORALITY

TOPICS

GENERAL → Medical; Sexuality; Business; Social Justice; War; Environmental

SPECIFIC → Abortion; Capital Punishment; Divorce; Just Wage
ETHICS VS. MORALITY

Ethics - Uses pure reason. Doesn't invoke divine revelation.

Morality - Takes articles of faith for granted. (eg. 10 Commandments and creed)

Ethics
1) "A discipline dealing with good and evil and with moral duty"
2) "moral principles or practice"

Moral - "Of or relating to principles of right and wrong." But,...

Morality - Growth in relationship with God.
[Gives the broader picture.]
GOALS

• To understand "how moral theology is done."
• To get an understanding of the broad array of topics coming under the umbrella of "morality."
• To understand what is behind some of the controversy.
CONTROVERSY & CONTEMPORARY FACTORS

• The 'spirit of Vatican II' allowed for more openness
• View of law
• Level of education
• Interpretation
• Role of fear
• Gray was not as acknowledged
• Questioning was more taboo
• More liberty is taken to express only “personal” opinions
• Legalism was more prevalent
Morality - Law and Love

- Law and love are to reflect one another.
- Love is at the heart of the Christian message.
- Law as: **do's** and **don'ts**
  - absolute vs. guideline
  - intrinsically evil vs. relative

- Relation between law/rules and theology
- Extreme views
EPIKEIA (EPIEIKEIA)

• Greek -- Means "reasonableness"
• Meant to unbind one in particular circumstances. (ie., the authority/ruler/legislator would not hold bound)
• Invokes a higher law. (Human law is imperfect.)
• Allows one to make just decisions. Brings about a corrective. Literal following of the law may lead to injustice.

• Application in:
  1) civil law [run red light in emergency];
  2) ecclesiastical law [driving 300 miles to Mass while on vacation]

• Legalism takes over without epikeia
APPROACHES TO MORALITY

1) Concern entails minimums
2) Motivation
3) Moral Theology should show:
   a) the nobility of the Christian vocation;
   b) the obligation to bring forth fruit in charity
      for the life of the world.
4) Act / Person Centered
THEMES CHARACTERISTIC OF THE RENEWAL OF MORAL THEOLOGY

1) Call/response theme

2) Christ centeredness

3) Witness in the World

4) Doing the maximum; not just the minimum

5) Continual Conversion
CONVERSION

- *Conversion* = turning toward God
- *Repentance* = turning away from sin

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- **Ez. 36:26** - Replace stony hearts with natural hearts.
- **Mt. 5:3-12; Lk. 6:20-23** - The Beatitudes
- **Mt. 5-7** - Sermon on the Mount
- **Rom. 12:2**
- **Eph. 4:24**
- **Col. 3:5-17**
- **Ps. 15**

These passages tell us what a converted life "looks like".

VIRTUE - CC 1803 - "A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good."
PROCESS OF CONVERSION

1) **Disillusionment** - Entails a sense that all is not right.

2) **Liminality** - Entails a teetering on the brink, or standing on the limit.

3) **Aggregation** – Entails a “coming together”, and brings hope.
   - Conversion is a process, not a one-time event. It is an ongoing response to the love of God who loves us.
   - There are, however, moments of more *profound* conversion (eg. Story of St. Paul).

IMAGES OF CONVERSION

- Conversion as birth
- Conversion as dying-rising
KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

"Convention" – A generally accepted custom, practice, or belief.

Level 1 -- Pre-Conventional Level

Stage 1 - People act out and respond in light of: a) consequences (punishment, reward, exchange of favors); or, b) merely defer to authority.

Stage 2 – People act out and respond in light of trying to satisfy one's own needs and occasionally, the needs of others.

Level 2 -- Conventional Level

Stage 3 – People act out in light of wanting others to think well of them.

Stage 4 – People act out in accord with the conventions established by: law / nation / authority / family.

Level 3 -- Post-Conventional (Autonomous, or Principled) Level

Stage 5 – People begin to think in more utilitarian terms (what is the greatest good for the greatest number of people). Law is no longer considered an absolute.

Stage 6 – People act based on decisions of conscience, formed in accord with ethical principles that they have "made their own."
NATURAL LAW

• Key idea: If we look at the world / universe, and the "nature of things", we can see an order, and this order becomes obligatory and we must live in accord with it.

• **Heraclitus** (6th cent. BC) -- Said wisdom lends an ear to nature, and acts in accord with it. Said all our human lives are based in one divine law that we find expressed in nature.

• **Stoics** – (from around 305 BC) -- Said we must conform our conduct to a universal reason which can be discovered in nature. Thus, there is intelligence in nature and it must be lived by.

• **Cicero** (106 - 43 BC) -- Said, "True law is right reason in accord with nature."
SCRIPTURE AND NATURAL LAW

• Jer. 31:33 - "I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts."

• Heb. 8:10 - "I will put my laws in their minds and I will write them upon their hearts."

FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON NATURAL LAW

• Irenaeus - Said the 10 commandments are expressions of natural law. (CC 2070)

• Augustine - Said natural law could be found in eternal law because creation is an expression of God. Therefore, it is eternal or divine law.

• Leo XIII (CCC 1954) – "The natural law is written and engraved in the soul of each and every man, because it is human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to sin... But this command of human reason would not have the force of law if it were not the voice and interpreter of a higher reason to which our spirit and our freedom must be submitted."

• Aquinas (CCC 1955) - "The natural law is nothing other than the light of understanding placed in us by God; through it we know what we must do and what we must avoid. God has given this light or law at the creation."
VALUES, MORAL PRINCIPALS, NORMS

- **Values** - peace, love, patience, life, self-sacrifice

- **Moral principles** are developed from values.

- **Norms** are developed from moral principles. Norms entail specific applications.
CONSCIENCE

• What is it? What do we mean by it?
  1) *synderesis* - ie., a habit or a power / faculty (CC 1777 & 1780)
  2) *syneidesis* - a judgment of an act as right or wrong (CC 1778)

St. Thomas Aquinas (definitions):
  1) An innate or native ability to think about moral dimensions in our lives.
  2) The practical intellect, the human mind at work making judgments.
CONSCIENCE IN SCRIPTURE

• The Greek has two words – one translated "heart", the other, "conscience."
• Ez. 36:26ff [stony.. material hearts]
• Ps. 95:7f [heart]
• 1 Jn. 3:19-21 [heart]
• 1 Cor. 8 [conscience] – About eating meat sacrificed to idols.
• 1 Cor. 10:23-30 [conscience] – About eating meat sacrificed to idols.
LEVELS OF CONSCIENCE
(Entails the 'process' we go through.)

1) An awakening to a sense of responsibility
   Moves us to seek the good and the truth

2) (a) Begin perceiving specific values
    (b) Apply values to categories of actions

3) Decide on course of action.
   The question becomes: “What **must** I do?”
FOLLOWING OUR CONSCIENCE

- **CC 1790 & 1800** - Say we must obey the certain judgment of conscience.
- **CC 1782 & 2106** - Says we cannot be forced to act contrary to our conscience. (DH)
- **CC 1783, 1801, 2039** – Statements adding balance and qualifications on freedom to follow one’s conscience

- **VS 113 δ 2** -- "Opposition to the teaching of the church's pastors cannot be seen as a legitimate expression either of Christian freedom or of the diversity of the Spirit's gifts."
- **VS 32 δ 1** -- Comments on mistaken notion of conscience (the person) as "the supreme tribunal." Not the person, but God.
- **VS 60(c) & VS 61(c)** -- Says conscience can't independently and exclusively decide what is good and evil, and we are not autonomous.
Declaration on Religious Liberty
(*Dignitatis Humanae*)

- **CC 1738** - Comments on freedom in religious matters (cf. DH).

- **CC 2106** - Comments on following one’s conscience in religious matters (cf. DH).

- But note **CC 2108** - Clarifies between a 'moral' right to error, versus a 'natural' right to civil liberty.

- Thus, we do not have a moral right to error. A moral right must be based on what is objectively true.
Correct vs. Erroneous Conscience

• The question is: Does it or does it not agree with objective truth?
• We may be convinced / certain, but also mistaken.
• CC 1793 - Ignorance releases one from guilt, if {cf. CC 1791} one has sought to discover the truth.
• Rom. 2:14-16
• Rom 14:13-23
• Relation between WHAT is believed vs. WHY it is believed
AUTHORITY / MAGISTERIUM

- CCC 2033
- CCC 2034
- Magisterium = those who hold teaching authority, i.e., bishops along with the pope.

VIEWS OF AUTHORITY

1) The magisterium is inspired by the Holy Spirit and passes this on to the community.
2) The Holy Spirit speaks to the whole Christian community (and world community) and those who hold teaching authority then have discernment and must listen to do this discerning. The sensus fidelum (sense of the faithful) is acknowledged, but the Church has the final say.

- CCC 2032 – The Church is “the pillar and bulwark” of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
EVOLUTION OF THOUGHT THROUGHOUT HISTORY

• Throughout history, all Christians have had to consider actions and ask how to live out their faith.

• Moral wisdom is passed on, articulated, and continues to develop.

• Extremes:
  1) to say we have all right and wrong at a given point
  2) to say that none of the moral wisdom from the past counts

• What about: Usury; Galileo; Slavery; Marriage and Annulments
SIN

• OT view: No particular word for it. Two are (Hebrew):
  1) *hatta* - to miss the mark (implies a missed goal)
  2) *pasa* - means "rebellion"

• NT view (Greek):
  3) *hamartia* - means to stumble on the way

• Sin is:
  1) a voluntary *turning away from God* as our end goal in life
  2) a *decision, omission, or attitude* which is in conflict with God's ways
  3) an abuse of the freedom God gave us
• **MORTAL VS. VENIAL** - Based on the consequences, i.e., mortal keeps us from heaven and is sin unto death.  
  • Scriptural reference to 'mortal' sin: 1 Jn. 5:16-17

• Conditions for mortal sin:  
  1) Grave / serious matter;  
  2) Sufficient reflection;  
  3) Full consent of the will.

• To be guilty:  
  1) You must realize that you are acting against your conscience and God’s law, and;  
  2) You must freely choose to do it.

• Degrees of seriousness

• **CC 1858** - Says grave matter is specified by the Ten Commandments.

• Venial sin - Not a 'complete' turning away
FUNDAMENTAL OPTION/STANCE

• Is about being basically "for" or basically "against" God.

• Eg. Example of adultery

• What happens here:
  1) Mortal sin becomes a matter of *one act vs. many acts* (living 'in a state of mortal sin' becomes associated with many sins and a reversal of opting for God).
  2) Venial sin becomes a matter of acting inconsistently with our fundamental option for God.

The questions arising out of fundamental option thinking:
  1) Can *one* individual act constitute a mortal sin?
  2) Can *one* mortal sin send you to hell?

• For clarification of teaching:
  1) See VS 68
  2) See VS 70 δ 2b, 3, 4
HUMAN ACTS

• See CC 1749 -- And "In Brief" [1757 - 1761] gives a good summary.

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

• CC 1735 -- Statement on imputability (blame) and responsibility [and impediments.]

• CC 1754 -- Statement on circumstances
FORMAL AND MATERIAL COOPERATION

- **FORMAL**
  - **EXPLICIT**
  - **IMPLICIT**

- **MATERIAL**
  - **IMMEDIATE**
    - Act is the same between wrongdoer and cooperator.
  - **REMOTE**
    - Act is distinguishable between wrongdoer and cooperator.

- **NECESSARY**
- **PROXIMATE**
- **CONTINGENT**
FORMAL AND MATERIAL COOPERATION

A. Formal - always wrong
A willing participation in the sinful act of another. (Explicit)

OR

When one either intends as an end, or chooses as a means, the evil done by another or others, ie., one makes the evildoing one's own. (Implicit)

Formal cooperation:
1) Explicit - "Yes, I'm happy to drive the get away car because I want to be an accomplice."
2) Implicit - "I am personally opposed, but I am willing to help you get what you want."

Another example - Physician assisted suicide:
Explicit – "Yes, I too believe in the right to commit suicide, therefore, I will write the prescription for a lethal dose."
Implicit – "No, I do not believe in the right to commit suicide, but I do believe in individual choice, therefore, in spite of my personal opposition, I will write out the prescription for a lethal dose that my patient may take to commit suicide."
FORMAL AND MATERIAL COOPERATION

B. Material
A person does not share the evil intention, but, nonetheless chooses to do something helpful in effecting the evil.

OR
A person does something which facilitates the evil act, but does not make it his/her own.

[Material cooperation does not take away all responsibility.]

Material can be:

a) **Immediate** - Material cooperation is immediate when the object (act) of the cooperator is the same as the object of the wrongdoer.

b) **Mediate** - The act of the cooperator is not that of the wrongdoer's.

Mediate can be:

1) **Proximate** – (means *direct* or *near*) eg. The recovery room nurse who cares for all post-surgical patients, including those who may have undergone morally illicit procedures. This form of routine care is not intrinsically evil.

2) **Remote** – (means *not near*)
[My examples: Hospital personnel in the billing department who do the paperwork. Hospital janitors who clean operating rooms where procedures are done.]

Proximate can be:

1) **Necessary** - Material cooperation without which the sinful act *could not* occur. [eg. You are the only available anesthesiologist available to assist with a woman undergoing a combination C-section and tubal ligation.]

2) **Contingent** (also called *free* cooperation) - Is cooperation without which the evil act *could* still take place.
[eg. Would exist if you are not the only available anesthesiologist available to assist with a woman undergoing a combination C-section and tubal ligation.]
OBJECTIVE / SUBJECTIVE MORALITY

• The extremes of subjectivism notions say there is no objective truth. 'Right' and 'wrong' are totally subjective. Each individual replaces God and is left to decide for themselves what truth is. Thus, morality is a totally subjective matter.

SITUATION ETHICS

• Says the rightness or wrongness of something is determined solely by the situation you are in.
• Exceptions to the rule
• Intrinsically evil acts
Objective/Subjective and Situation Ethics

Moral Issues to evaluate:

• A. "Can I continue to manufacture nuclear weapons?"
• B. "Should I have a vasectomy (if my wife has a health problem)?"
• C. "Should I enjoy my candy bar (as a diabetic in a nursing home)?"
• D. "Should I have a drink?"
PRINCIPLE OF TOTALITY
The Lesser of Two Evils

If you are faced with two unavoidable evils, the lesser evil must be chosen.

Eg. If faced with crashing your vehicle into a crowd of people, or one person, you choose the one person.
In applying this principle, one cannot intend either outcome. You are merely choosing between two unavoidable evils.

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Counseling the Lesser Evil

This entails a situation where you face, what you deem to be, unavoidable evil, and you want to minimize it.

Eg. If you see someone threatening to shoot someone, you could try to convince them to be okay with robbing the person.
You don't intend the robbery. You are trying to lessen an evil about to be committed that you deem unavoidable.
PRINCIPLE OF DOUBLE EFFECT

• Entails an act with a good effect and a bad effect.

CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLE OF DOUBLE EFFECT

1) The act is, in itself, good or, at least, morally indifferent.
2) The good effect is directly intended and the bad effect is foreseen, but unintended.
3) The good effect cannot be caused (or achieved) by the bad effect.
4) The good effect is proportionate to the bad effect.
5) The good effect can only be achieved concomitant with, but not by means of, the bad effect.

[Some do not add this #5, reducing it to only the above 4.]
APPLICATIONS OF PRINCIPLE OF DOUBLE EFFECT

- CCC 1737
- Unviable baby (direct vs. indirect abortion)
- Sterilization (direct vs. indirect)
- Life-shortening pain control
- CC 2263 - Killing in self-defense
SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

• **Gen 1:28** -- Procreative dimension (Be fertile and multiply.) [Repeated in Gen 9:1,7]

• **Gen. 2:24** -- Unitive dimension (The two become one)

• In church teaching, the meaning of sexuality and the meaning of marriage are very intertwined.
INFERTILITY: A SCENARIO INCORPORATING INTRINSICALLY EVIL ACTS (OBJECT), CIRCUMSTANCES, AND INTENTION

- **CC 2376 & 2377** - Deal with the morality of measures to overcome infertility (surrogacy, sperm banks, artificial insemination and *in vitro* fertilization).

- Infertility and masturbation

- “Premoral evil” (Also called 'physical‘; 'ontic‘; or 'nonmoral' evil) Here, evil does not mean right or wrong but, rather, a "lack of perfection."

  *(Note: This concept is **not** Church teaching.)*
BIRTH CONTROL: ANOTHER SCENARIO

- **CC 2366** – *Humanae Vitae* (1968)

- **CC 2367 & 2368** - Couples are to be responsible in 'regulation of procreation.' [financial issues, etc.]
PROPORTIONALISM

• Entails “weighing” the values or disvalues to determine the morality of an act. Good / bad effects are also considered.

CONSEQUENTIALISM

• Entails looking solely at consequences to determine the morality of an act.

(See VS 75 δ 2 for comment on both)
THE CHURCH’S POSITION

• No circumstances or intention can justify an intrinsically evil act.
• Certain norms are absolutes, must be followed, and cannot be compromised.

THE OPPOSING POSITION

• Says you take into account, the human act, along with intentions, consequences, values and disvalues.
• Problems with this:
  1) We then have to ask about proportionality, consequences and intentions in all cases.
  2) Who sets up this scale? Where do you get the higher value?
  3) The slippery slope... Where does it stop? You could attempt to justify anything, no matter how atrocious.
ROLE OF SCRIPTURE

• Parables - A common form of teaching in gospels.
• Epistles - Address issues both on a general and specific level.

• Can use Scripture for:
  1) searching out values/ideals;
  2) norms;
  3) principles [eg. love neighbor as self];
  4) analogy [compare similar circumstances].

• Scripture is not always totally clear with regard to every issue.
ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY MEANS

• "Ordinary means of preserving life are all medicines, treatments and operations which offer a reasonable hope of benefit and which can be used without excessive expense, pain or other inconvenience. Extraordinary means are all medicines, treatments and operations which cannot be obtained or used without excessive expense, pain or other inconvenience, or which, if used, would offer a reasonable hope of benefit." Gerald Kelly (moral theologian)

• Can, to some extent, vary from person to person (egs. age; response to a drug; the above factors)

• What constitutes ordinary and extraordinary has, to some extent, been seen differently throughout history. Technology has changed this. (eg. amputation)
• **DNR** falls under ordinary / extraordinary as well. (Ex. An elderly person with many serious health issues, verses someone who went into cardiac arrest during an auto accident, but is not apparently seriously hurt in other respects)

• Time factor in resuscitation

• The Church does not define, in every instance, what constitutes ordinary and extraordinary care. Thus, even though these general principles are given, the application of them to a specific situation is not always absolutely clear. The terms used in formulating these principles are "relative" terms.
FOOD TUBE VS. RESPIRATOR

• The food tube is seen as ordinary more so than the respirator.
  1) The respirator is more so medical treatment and an artificial means to sustain life, while the food tube provides a basic need to sustain life, and is not medical treatment.
  2) If a person can't breathe on their own, it is indicative of a bodily function that has stopped functioning. However, even though a person can't eat, if food is provided, their bodily functions continue functioning.

• Question: If in a persistent vegetative state, does providing food and water become medical treatment? No. However, food and water would be extraordinary if it cannot be assimilated, or if dying anyway. (See Directive 58 of the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (revised 2009) (USCCB).)
Food Tube and Respirator

After careful deliberation, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has revised directive 58 of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* (2001). Here is the language of the new directive: (December 16, 2009)

In principle, there is an obligation to provide patients with food and water, including medically assisted nutrition and hydration for those who cannot take food orally. This obligation extends to patients in chronic and presumably irreversible conditions (e.g., the "persistent vegetative state") who can reasonably be expected to live indefinitely if given such care. Medically assisted nutrition and hydration become morally optional when (1) they cannot reasonably be expected to prolong life or (2) when they would be "excessively burdensome for the patient or (3) (would) cause significant physical discomfort, for example resulting from complications in the use of the means employed." For instance, as a patient draws close to inevitable death from an underlying progressive and fatal condition, certain measures to provide nutrition and hydration may become excessively burdensome and therefore not obligatory in light of their very limited ability to prolong life or provide comfort.
EUTHANASIA

• "Euthanasia is an action or omission that of itself or by intention causes death in order to alleviate suffering." ERDCHS (1995) #60.

• The basis against it is 5th commandment -- Don't directly take the life of an innocent or helpless person. This is a positive understanding of the 5th commandment, i.e., take care of the body and life.

• One doesn't have a right to die.

• Have active and passive euthanasia.

• The problem today is more so a passive euthanasia, which entails withdrawing and omitting.

• Assisted suicide is active euthanasia.

• CC 2276-2279 [read]
CASE STUDIES

• Infant Doe. Bloomington, Indiana (1982). Born with Downes Syndrome and his esophagus was not connected to his stomach.

• Baby Jane Doe. Numerous medical problems: 1) spina bifida; 2) hydrocephalus (excessive fluid on the brain); 3) microcephaly (unusually small head); 4) malformation of the brain stem.

• Karen Ann Quinlan - In a coma, (drug and alcohol overdose) when the respirator was removed, she began breathing on her own, and lived for another ten years.

• Terry Shivo – She had no medical complications; that is, there was nothing physically wrong with her that was leading to her imminent death.
LIVING WILLS

• By this document a person decides completely in advance whether they want to be kept alive by technology. It is a "yes" or "no" statement, which then places the matter in the hands of the medical community. It is not advised.

ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE

• Along with a Durable Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy, this document gives a friend or family member the authority to make health care decisions according to one's mind as expressed in an Advance Directive.
ORGAN DONATION

- CC 2296 – Is revised
- Potential for abuse can't be understated, i.e., removing organs before death

QUESTION REGARDING WHEN DEATH OCCURS

- A heart can beat outside the body for awhile
- People whose heart had stopped were later found to be alive

- Apnea test. Used to determine if the person will breathe on their own if ventilator is removed.

- "Death has occurred when... there has been an irreversible cessation of all brain function." (Working Group, Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Dec. 1989)

- Brain death – A person's EEG may be flat, but there is still circulation keeping the brain alive.
Remarks for Death Penalty, Just War, Self-Defense

The “right to life” entails no deliberate, direct attack on (morally) innocent human life.

Justice obliges us to protect the innocent.
DEATH PENALTY

Largely supported by OT: adultery - Lev. 20:10; Dt. 22:22

"Punishment" is:
1) About restoring rights to the abused innocent victim
2) To restore order to the common good
3) A corrective measure ie., rehabilitation
4) A deterrent

ARGUMENTS FOR:
1) **CC 2263** - Protection of innocent / "social" defense
2) Person has given up right to life
3) Does not entail the killing of an innocent
4) As a deterrent to crime (Numerous studies indicated it is not.)
5) As retribution

**CC 2267** - States the death penalty is okay *if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor*. This is a result of the statement in *Evangelium Vitae*. 
ARGUMENTS AGAINST:

1) False accusation
2) Irreversible once death is induced
3) Revenge motive
4) Barbaric (method vs. merely doing it)
5) Fairness of application (prejudice -- racism, sex, the poor, etc.; particular crimes that should or should not warrant it)
6) Frustrates our Christian commitment to seek the redemption and reconciliation of the wrong-doer.
7) The Document on Religious Liberty strongly emphasizes the dignity of the human person, lending to the thinking that the death penalty is not acceptable.
Just War Theory

CCC 2309

CCC 2315 & 2329
Business Ethics

CCC 2409

CCC 2434 – Just wage

CCC 2424 & 2432
Common Good

CCC 2288

CCC 1905 – Seek the common good

CCC 2425
Helping the Poor

CCC 2443 - 2449
Passions, Feelings & Thoughts

CCC 1767