

Class Notes: Trinal Period

Part I: Course Introduction

- The aim of the course is to make the students examine their choices in their personal behavior and lifestyles, as well as societal values and norms that influence those choices from the perspective of Christian faith, Holy Scripture, Catholic teachings and traditions, liturgy, spirituality and prayer, and social justice.
- At the beginning of the course, we are led to go deeper into our consciousness and ask the basic questions in life.
- Life's Basic Question (LBQ) – common questions that often lead us to see the direction we are taking in life. It touches the whole of the human person,
 - Examples of LBQ:
 - What if life all about?
 - Who am I?
 - Where am I going?

Part II: Ethics vs Morality

Definition of Terms:

- **Ethics** – general study of moral life, which deals with two types of question, one critically normative and the other theoretical. (Nabor-Nery, 2010)

Types of Ethical Judgments and Ethical Reasoning:

- **Descriptive ethics** is simply describing how people behave. (Stephen M. Perle, DC, MS)
- **Normative ethics** tries to establish norms or typical appropriate behaviors people should perform. (Stephen M. Perle, DC, MS)
- **Philosophical Ethics** or Moral Philosophy is a higher level of generality and abstraction in which normative judgments and their supporting reasons are analyzed and evaluated. (Nabor-Nery, 2010)
- **Character of Ethics**
 - Ethics of Being – focuses on the interiority of the person or the person's character. (Nabor-Nery, 2010)
 - Ethics of Doing – focuses on the right action. It makes decision to resolve conflicts of moral values so that we might do the right action. (Nabor-Nery, 2010)
- **Formal Elements of Ethics:** (Nabor-Nery, 2010)
 - Understanding of the good as the goal of the moral life and the basic reason for being moral.
 - Understanding of the human person as an agent.
 - The point of reference, which serve as the criteria for a moral judgment.
- **Postulates of Ethics**
 - The Existence of a Supernatural Being/God
 - Human Intellect and Free Will

- Immortality of the Soul
- **Morality** comes from the Latin word *mos* (*pl. mores*) which means “custom”, “habit” or “character.” Translated in Greek as *εθος*.
- **Morality** is looking at how good or bad our conduct is, and our standards about conduct. (Stephen M. Perle, DC, MS)
- **It** is the quality of goodness or evilness which is attributed to human acts or to particular aspects of life such as sexual behaviour, religious practices, and the wide range of the free and conscious acts of man whether as an individual or in a group. It attempts to discern the implications of revelation for human behavior, to answer the question: How ought we, who have been gifted by God, to live? (Nabor-Nery, 2010)
- **Christian Morality** is used to refer to what we would call moral conduct or standards based on the Christian faith. When we say moral conduct, it refers to the internal disposition and being of the person formed by the individual's experiences, belief systems, cultural influences and historical origin. (Delfin, 2013) It depends upon faith: empirical, linguistic, logical, ontological, epistemological, psychological, and normative. (Walters, 237-277)

The Elements of Biblical Morality (Nabor-Nery, 2010)

- **Covenant** – Faithful praxis (reflection-in-practice) is concatenated in ancient Israel with the Law (such as 10 commandments) and with the covenant (Ex. 20:22-23:33).
 - It is the ultimate and very personal engagement with Yahweh.
- **Kingdom** – is central to the teaching, preaching, proclamation and ministry of Jesus.
- **Repentance** – is turning away from old and sinful ways into a new and Christian way. This is a prerequisite for the kingdom. The molding of every baptized into a kingdom of Christ's follower.
- **Discipleship** – is a membership in the kingdom. It is a total commitment to the fulfillment of God's kingdom. This membership includes obligation. One of these obligations would be the strict observance of the Law as the rule of the Kingdom.
- **Love** – is the life of the kingdom.
 - The love of *koinonia* – this is the unitive love that aims to form a community of believers, both fraternal and sororal.
 - The love of *diakonia* – is charity exercising solidarity.
- **Beatitudes** – is the charter of the kingdom. They are good news. It tells us that in the kingdom, the priority is love not the earthly and temporal values.

Moral Message throughout the Centuries: (Nabor-Nery, 2010)

- **Early Church moral message:** The Kingdom of God is at hand. The Kingdom as the central message becomes the basis of morality. Everything that would contribute to the fulfillment of the kingdom become good.
- **Post-biblical period:** Focused on the threat of paganism. False worship and pagan images are highly dread. Figures such as Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, and Cyril of Jerusalem, defended the faith against paganism. St. Augustine was considered as the greatest figure of morality.
- **7th Century:** Celtic monks made their appearance and influence in teaching that moral life focuses on

avoiding sin and highlighting individual action.

- **13th Century:** Emergence of universities. St. Thomas Aquinas did the greatest influence explicating grace as the core of the entire law.
- **14th and 15th Centuries:** nominalists introduced ethical individualism and ethical legalism. Casuistry becomes the practice.
 - **Casuistry** – dealing the cases by a relative approach so that no general template would fit to all types of classified case.
- **16th Century:** Thomistic revival. (Council of Trent: manuals focused on the sacrament of penance where emphasized.)
- **17th and 18th Centuries:** the spread Jansenism and laxist school of thought.
 - **Jansenism** – a school of thought that follows a more rigorous path of morality.
 - **Laxists** follow a more permissive path of morality.
- **19th and 20th centuries:** morality disengaged from legalism. Basis of Christian morality is the Kingdom of God.
- **Second Vatican Council:** “*ressourcement*” a French word which means going back to “the source.” Retrieving the biblical tradition in the context of the contemporary church. *Aggiornamento* bringing the church to the day (updating), her beliefs, doctrines and teachings. Morality is centered in the human dignity and the common good.

Elements of Moral Act (Nabor-Nery, 2010)

1. **Judgment** – judgment of what is morally good or bad.
2. **Choice** – choosing what is good and what is distinct from the judgment of conscience.
3. **Object of the moral act** – consist of the act itself and those realities which are affected by the act and which should be considered in deciding whether the act is morally good or bad.

THE SOURCES OR CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS OF MORALITY (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] 1750-1754)

1750 The morality of human acts depends on:

- the object chosen;
- the end in view or the intention;
- the circumstances of the action.

The object, the intention, and the circumstances make up the "sources," or constitutive elements, of the morality of human acts.

1751 The *object* chosen is a good toward which the will deliberately directs itself. It is the matter of a human act. The object chosen morally specifies the act of the will, insofar as reason recognizes and judges it to be or not to be in conformity with the true good. Objective norms of morality express the rational order of good and evil, attested to by conscience.

1752 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 alms-giving). *Cf. Mt 6:24.*

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.

Our Notion of GOOD

The concept of end coincides with that of good.

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"). (CCC 1755)

Kind of Goodness (Nabor-Nery, 2010)

- **Objectively Good** – an objective act done according to the objectively good judgment. Anything that is good in itself. (Eg. Healthy food)
- **Subjectively Good** – a choice that conforms to the judgment of the conscience. An actual possession of the objective good. (Eg. Artistic painting is objectively good yet subjectively good to me)
- **Essential and Accidental Good** – everything that has goodness in their essence is essentially good. Food for example is good essentially. Accidental good are those that fit the wants of an individual person such as money, academic degree, power, luxuries in life.
- **Real and Apparent Good** – Real good has an intrinsic value. (Eg good acts and good habits) Apparent good is actually evil visualized as good in certain aspects such as diseases, sadness, death etc. (Eg. Real good food for critically ill patient may be very harmful.)
- **Perfective and Non-perfective Good** – perfective good shares to the integral perfection of the person such as education, food, exercise, medicine, virtue, health, knowledge. Also known as *disinterested good*. Non-perfective good shares to the external appearance such as clothes, wealth, etc. also known as *delectable good*.
- **Perfect and Imperfect Good** – Perfect good (unlimited, absolute good) constitutes fullness of qualities capable of satisfying human desire. (Eg. God) Imperfect good constitutes certain qualities that is not capable of satisfying human desire except in relative or limited sphere.
- **Relative and Absolute Good** - Relative good is anything which is suitable to another being such as food, drink, clothes, shelter, etc. Absolute good is anything suitable to a being itself, irrespective of other beings. (Eg. Body structure, etc)

- **Ontological Good** – when a thing is good in its very entity or reality. Every being is an ontological good.
- **Physical Good** – when a thing satisfies the demand of the nature of a being. (Eg. Sight, hearing, etc.)
- **Moral Good** – When a thing has everything demanded of it by the moral law.

THE COMMON GOOD (CCC 1905-1912)

1905 In keeping with the social nature of man, the good of each individual is necessarily related to the common good, which in turn can be defined only in reference to the human person:

Do not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together. (*Ep. Barnabae*, 4,10:PG 2,734.)

1906 By common good is to be understood "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." (*GS 26 § 1*; cf. *GS 74 § 1*.) The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. It consists of *three essential elements*:

1907 First, the common good presupposes *respect for the person* as such. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. Society should permit each of its members to fulfill his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as "the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard... privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion." (*GS 26 § 2*.)

1908 Second, the common good requires the *social well-being and development* of the group itself. Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on. (Cf. *GS 26 § 2*.)

1909 Finally, the common good requires *peace*, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the *security* of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defense.

1910 Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such; it is in the *political community* that its most complete realization is found. It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies.

1911 Human interdependence is increasing and gradually spreading throughout the world. The unity of the human family, embracing people who enjoy equal natural dignity, implies a *universal common good*. This good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to "provide for the different needs of men; this will involve the sphere of social life to which belong questions of food, hygiene, education,... and certain situations arising here and there, as for example... alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world, and assisting migrants and their families." (*GS 84 § 2*.)

1912 The common good is always oriented towards the progress of persons: "The order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around." (*GS 26 § 3*.) This order is founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love.