

Life in Christ

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

“Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

“Which ones?” he inquired.

Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,’[a] and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’[b]”

“All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Part One of the Catechism of the Catholic Church presents the **Creed** the revealed truths of the divine plan of salvation and the invitation to faith in this Revelation.

Part Two presents the **Seven Sacraments** by which the saving grace of God is made available to us. We receive this gift of divine love by our participation in the Christian mysteries.

Part Three explores **our life in Christ** and the Holy Spirit, which we have received through Revelation and the Sacraments. It unfolds the various ways we respond to divine love through our personal and social moral behavior.

In Section One of Part Three, the Catechism explores the various elements, principles, and foundations of Christian morality by addressing the dignity of the human person, the human community, and God's salvation through God's law and grace. In Section Two, it applies these principles to each of the Ten Commandments.

Made in the Image of God

- Every person bears the dignity of being made in the image of God
- God has given us free will to seek and love what is true, good and beautiful.
- Original Sin has darkened our minds, weakened our wills, and inclines us to sin.
- Baptism delivers us from Original Sin but not from its effects - especially the inclination to sin.
- We constantly fight an inner battle - the powerful surge towards the good because we are the image of God and the darker impulse towards evil because of the effects of Original Sin.
- Human life is sacred. It's different from all other forms of life, since it alone is imprinted with the very image of its Creator.

The Responsible Practice of Freedom

- God gave us intelligence and the capability to act freely
- Some people say that due to outside forces we are not truly free. (inner compulsions, social pressure, childhood experiences, or genetic makeup) Our behavior is already determined.
- We are still free and responsible for our actions. Our freedom may be limited but is real nonetheless.
- The best way to grow in freedom is to perform good acts.
- Good deeds help us to make us free and develop good habits.
- You lose freedom by evil acts
- Sin makes us slaves of evil and reduces our capacity to be free.

The Understanding of Moral Acts

- Every Moral Act consists of three elements:
 - The Objective Act (What we do)
 - The Subject Goal or intentions (Why we do the act)
 - The Concrete Situation or Circumstances in which we perform the act (The Consequences)
- Individual Act to be morally good what we do must be objectively good.
- Direct killing of the innocent, torture, and rape are examples of that are always wrong.
- For an act to be morally good, one's intention must be good

- We can never do something wrong or evil in order to bring about a good.
- “the end does not justify the means”
- The circumstances and the consequences of the act make up the third element of the moral action.
- The circumstances may affect one’s personal moral responsibility for the act.

The Reality of Sin and Trust in God’s Mercy

- When someone denies the existence of sin it can result in spiritual and psychological damage because it is ultimately a denial of the truth about ourselves.
- Sin is understood as an offense against God as well our neighbors and therefore wrong.
- There are conditions for a sin to be a moral sin:
 - Grave Matter
 - Full Knowledge
 - Deliberate Consent (Freedom)
- Moral Sin destroys the loving relationship with God that we need for eternal happiness.
- If not repented, it results punishment in hell
- Examples
- Venial sin is a departure from the moral order in a less serious matter
- Examples
- God mercy is greater than sin
- The very heart of the Gospel is the revelation of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him”
- To receive this mercy, we must be willing to admit our sinfulness

The Formation of Conscience

- Conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act.
- A good conscience requires lifelong formation
- Each baptized follower of Christ is obliged to form his or her conscience according to objective moral standards
- The gift of the Holy Spirit, combined with regular examination of our conscience, will help us develop a morally sensitive conscience.
- Certain Conscience- we believe that our conscience is in conformity with what is objectively true.

- A person can have “certain” conscience on the subjective level but an incorrect one on the objective level.
- Example: Ash Wednesday missing Mass thinking it’s a Holy Day on Obligation (page 314)
- Conscience is a person's subjective sense of what is right or wrong in a particular situation. On the subjective level, an individual's conscience is their own personal conviction about what is morally correct. However, on the objective level, a person's conscience can be incorrect if it is not in accordance with the teachings of the Church or with objective moral principles.
- Rules to follow in obeying one’s conscience:
 - Always follow a certain conscience
 - Incorrect conscience must be changed if possible
 - Do not act with a doubtful conscience.
- We must always obey the certain judgments of our conscience, realizing that our conscience can be incorrect..

Here are some guidelines for following one's conscience, as taught by the Catholic Church:

1. **Ensure that your conscience is well-formed:** This means educating yourself about the teachings of the Church, studying the scriptures, and seeking the guidance of a priest or spiritual guide.
2. **Listen to your conscience:** Your conscience is your inner voice that tells you what is right or wrong in a particular situation. Listen to it and take its guidance seriously.
3. **Act in accordance with your conscience:** Once you have formed your conscience and listened to its guidance, act on it. Make decisions and take actions that are in line with your conscience, even if they are difficult or unpopular.
4. **Seek to understand objective moral truth:** While your conscience is personal and subjective, it should be informed by objective moral truth. Seek to understand what the Church teaches about moral issues, and strive to live in accordance with those teachings.
5. **Respect the consciences of others:** Just as your conscience guides your own actions, so does the conscience of others guide their actions. Respect the consciences of others, even if you disagree with them.
6. **Be open to conversion:** Your conscience may change over time as you learn and grow in your faith. Be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the Church, and be willing to adjust your conscience if necessary.

The Excellence of Virtues

Virtues are habits of behavior that enable individuals to live a life of faith and moral excellence. They are habits of moral goodness that help individuals grow in their relationship with God and others.

The Catholic Church recognizes several cardinal virtues, which are considered the foundation of all other virtues. These cardinal virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance:

- **Prudence** is the ability to judge wisely and make sound decisions.
- **Justice** is the habit of giving others their due and acting in accordance with the common good.
- **Fortitude** is the courage to do what is right, even in the face of difficulty or danger.
- **Temperance** is the ability to control one's desires and passions and to act in moderation.

In addition to the cardinal virtues, the Catholic Church recognizes several theological virtues, which are gifts from God that enable individuals to live a life of faith and union with God. These theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity.

- Faith is belief in God and all that he has revealed.
- Hope is the confidence that God will fulfill his promises and bring us to eternal life.
- Charity is the love of God and neighbor, and the desire to serve others.

The Catholic Church teaches that the pursuit of virtue is a lifelong process, and that individuals grow in virtue through prayer, sacramental life, and works of charity and service. By striving to live a life of virtue, individuals grow in their relationship with God and become more like Christ, who is the perfect example of virtue. The excellence of virtues is a fundamental aspect of Catholic moral teaching, and is essential for living a life of faith and moral integrity.

Love, Rules, And Grace

- Love has to be the essential foundation of the moral life.
- We need moral guidance from the Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Precepts of the Church, and other rules to see how love works.
- The Christian moral life begins with a loving relationship with God.
- The moral life requires grace

The moral life requires grace. This is a truth that has been recognized by many religious traditions throughout history, and it is especially emphasized in the Christian faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of this need for grace in terms of living our lives “in Christ” and being guided by an inner presence—namely, the Holy Spirit—which actively enlightens us to do what is right.

In other words, without God's divine power working within us we would be unable to lead truly moral lives; his grace gives us both love and strength when it comes to making decisions about how we should behave as Christians. It provides an internal sense of morality which can help guide our actions even when external rules or laws are not present or applicable - allowing each individual believer access to their own unique spiritual understanding on any given issue they may encounter during life's journey..

Furthermore, having such a connection with God helps ensure that all believers have access to His mercy if they stumble along their path – no matter how far astray one might go from time-to-time due simply because everyone falls short at some point in life due to sinfulness nature as humans . In conclusion ,the importance placed upon receiving Grace through Christ cannot be overstated ;for only through Him can one hope attain true holiness while still walking on earth .

Life in Christ - Part 2

- **The Golden Rule** - “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.”

The previous chapter focused on the individual human being as a called to act morally. This section discusses morality as it pertains to the individual as situated within a community.

Respect for the dignity of each human person involves respect for the rights that flow from that dignity. Created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26), all human beings are endowed with rational souls; all have the same human nature and same origin and destiny. Redeemed by Jesus Christ, all are invited to enjoy equal dignity as children of God.

The Church affirms the sacredness and dignity of the life of every human person. The Church teaches that we are human beings from the moment of conception to natural death. Our origin and destiny is in God, our Creator.

Social justice can become a reality only when the transcendent dignity of each person is respected, safeguarded, and promoted. During the past century, the Church has articulated a systematic body of moral teachings on social issues. This body of social teaching constitutes an essential part of Christian moral life, based on the Gospel demands of love and justice.

In Catholic social teaching, the Church develops principles to evaluate social structures that serve both individuals and the common good. The Church's moral and spiritual guidelines are offered to us as a guide for personal morality and a means to evaluate just or unjust social structures.