

Review the Four Parts of the Catechism:

1. The Creed
 - a. The Apostles' Creed
 - b. The Nicene Creed
2. Sacraments
 - a. Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation)
 - b. Service (Matrimony, Holy Orders)
 - c. Healing (Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick)
3. Life in Christ
 - a. Ten Commandments
 - i. Love of God (First Three)
 - ii. Love of Neighbor (Last Seven)
4. Prayer
 - a. The Lord's Prayer (Our Father...)
 - i. First three petitions (glory of God, sanctification of His name, coming of the kingdom)
 - ii. Remaining four petitions (our wants to God)

MORALITY VIA REASON (ETHICS)

Freedom makes a man a moral subject. When he acts deliberately, man is, so to speak, the *father of his acts*. Human acts, that is, acts that are freely chosen in consequence of a judgment of conscience, can be morally evaluated. **They are either good or evil.**

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. (CCC 1749-1750)

HUMAN PERSON AS AGENT

The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment. By his deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they

make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth. With the help of grace they grow in virtue, avoid sin, and if they sin they entrust themselves as did the prodigal son to the mercy of our Father in heaven. In this way they attain to the perfection of charity. (CCC 1700)

FREE, DELIBERATE, CONSCIOUS ACTS

God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions. “God willed that man should be ‘left in the hand of his own counsel,’ so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him.”

Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his acts. (St. Irenaeus) (CCC 1730)

NATURAL MORAL LAW

“Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God... His conscience is man’s most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths.” (CCC 1776)

RESPONSIBILITY, CONSCIENCE

Conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. (CCC 1796)

A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. (CCC 1800)

FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE

A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. Everyone must avail himself of the means to form his conscience. (CCC 1798)

“Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions. (CCC 1803)

The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God. (St. Gregory of Nyssa)

Understanding the Virtues

There are several distinctions used when discussing the virtues that can cause confusion unless they are properly understood.

The distinction between *natural* and *supernatural* virtues is based on how they are acquired:

- **Natural virtues** are acquired by repeatedly doing good acts.
- **Supernatural virtues** are directly infused by God.

The distinction between *human* and *theological* virtues is based on their end (purpose):

- **Human virtues** help us to lead a morally good life. The cardinal virtues are human virtues.
- **Theological virtues** help us to live in relationship with God.

The *theological* virtues (faith, hope, and love) cannot come about by human action, they must be infused by God. Therefore, *theological* virtues are always *supernatural*. The cardinal virtues, however, can be both *natural* and *supernatural*. They can be acquired by repeated act (natural), and they are infused by God at baptism (supernatural).

Capital Sins

Pride – distorted self importance (one places himself before God and neighbor)

Avarice – also called covetousness, avarice is wanting things to which we do not have a right

Lust – more than just sexual passion, lust is an inordinate desire for something (e.g., food, wealth, sex)

Anger – harboring dislike and aversion toward someone; anger does not allow a healthy perspective

Gluttony – having too much of something; e.g., food, drink, shopping

Envy – serious jealousy; it means that if we cannot have what another has, then we do not want him to have it either

Sloth – spiritual laziness

Opposing Virtues

Humility – seeing ourselves as we truly are

Liberality – generosity with our goods and talents

Chastity – generosity with ourselves and temperance with our desires

Patience – also called meekness, patience is the virtue of putting God and others before ourselves and acting with gentleness

Sobriety/Temperance – using created goods well, with proper limits

Brotherliness – wanting the best for others and being happy for their goods and successes

Diligence in the service of God – to persevere in our spiritual life

Prudence: Natural prudence indicates the best way to earn money; whereas supernatural prudence indicates the best way to get to heaven and to help others get there.

Justice: Natural justice includes the work of the civil court; whereas supernatural justice includes teaching the Faith to children.

Temperance: Natural temperance includes dieting to lose weight; supernatural temperance includes offering up food for penance.

Fortitude: Natural fortitude includes athletic training; supernatural fortitude includes suffering martyrdom.

Saint Thomas More: An Example of Prudence and Justice

After studying for many years at Oxford, building a reputation as a respected attorney, and authoring widely popular works of political literature, such as his classic, *Utopia*, Saint Thomas More was appointed Lord Chancellor of England by King Henry VIII. When the Protestant Reformation hit England, Saint Thomas More was faced with a choice that forced him to use the virtues of prudence and justice. King Henry VIII wanted to divorce his lawful wife Catherine of Aragon. The Pope refused to give the Church's blessing so, in 1531, King Henry VIII separated the Church in England from that of Rome. He then called himself "Protector and Supreme Head of the Church of England." In doing so, King Henry broke with the Holy Father and the true Church and demanded that Saint Thomas More do the same. For several years, Saint Thomas More openly opposed the King's move and finally Henry had him imprisoned in the Tower of London where he stayed for fifteen months. On July 6, 1535, Saint Thomas More was condemned to death for refusing to recognize the King as head of the Church of England. Before losing his head, Saint Thomas declared: "I die the king's good servant, but God's first." In justice Saint Thomas gave God his due over that of the king, and in prudence he did the right thing in the best way possible, even though it led to his death.

Saint Maria Goretti: An Example of Temperance and Fortitude

Saint Maria Goretti died when she was twelve years old. Shortly before she died, a young man who worked with her family tried to make her commit an act of impurity. When she refused, he stabbed her several times. She died from these wounds shortly after, but before she died, she forgave the man who had killed her. Although she was only twelve, she showed remarkable temperance and incredible fortitude in refusing to be unchaste and carrying that refusal even to death. After her death, the young man was imprisoned and remained unrepentant until, one night, Saint Maria Goretti appeared to him in a dream and gave him some flowers, showing that she had forgiven him. Upon his release nearly thirty years later, he went directly to Saint Maria's mother and asked her to forgive him. Her mother replied that if her daughter could forgive him then she could do the same. In 1950 this man was in Saint Peter's Square watching as Pope Pius XII canonized Saint Maria Goretti.

Works of Mercy

- Works of mercy express our love for Christ by helping our neighbor.
- Man is comprised of body and soul and, therefore, man has physical and spiritual needs.
Both of these needs are cared for through the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

Spiritual Works

- The Spiritual Works of Mercy are for the spiritual needs of others.
- They are:
 - 1) Admonish the sinner.
 - 2) Instruct the ignorant.
 - 3) Counsel the doubtful.
 - 4) Comfort the sorrowful.
 - 5) Bear wrongs patiently.
 - 6) Forgive all injuries.
 - 7) Pray for the living and the dead.

Corporal Works

- The Corporal Works of Mercy are for the physical needs of others.
- They are:
 - 1) Feed the hungry.
 - 2) Give drink to the thirsty.
 - 3) Clothe the naked.
 - 4) Visit the imprisoned.
 - 5) Shelter the homeless.
 - 6) Visit the sick.
 - 7) Bury the dead.

Beatitudes

- Beatitude is the state of happiness of those who live the Christian life.
- There are eight Beatitudes, which speak of the blessings for:
 - 1) The poor in spirit.
 - 2) Those who mourn.
 - 3) The meek.
 - 4) Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
 - 5) The merciful.
 - 6) The pure of heart.
 - 7) Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.
 - 8) Those who are persecuted on account of Christ.