

# Catholic Moral Principles

For an Ethical Decision Making

Rev. Marco A. Durazo

1

## REVIEW OF CATHOLIC MORAL PRINCIPLES



**1. CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY**  
Created in God's Image



**3. THE UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS**



**2. NATURAL LAW**  
Human goods/rights  
The ultimate Good



**4. THE HUMAN ACT**  
Evaluation



**5. THE PROBLEM OF GOOD**  
Sin & Conversion



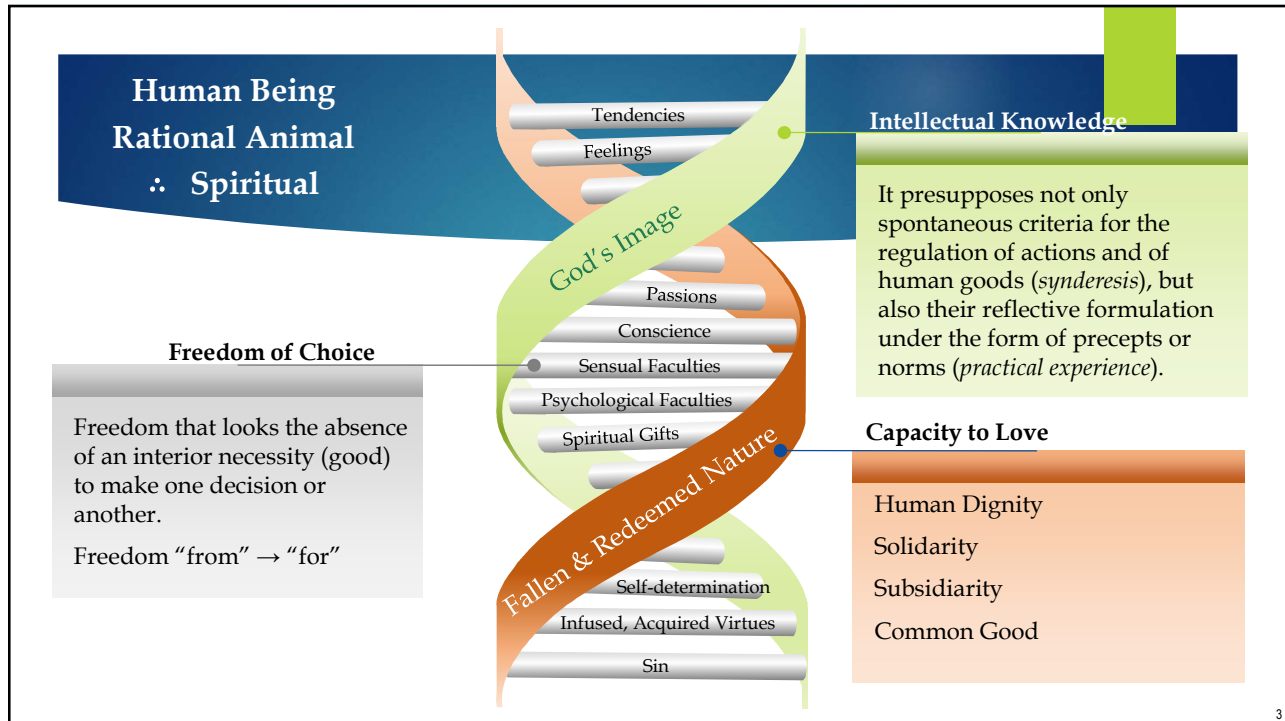
**6. SOCIAL DOCTRINE PRINCIPLES**



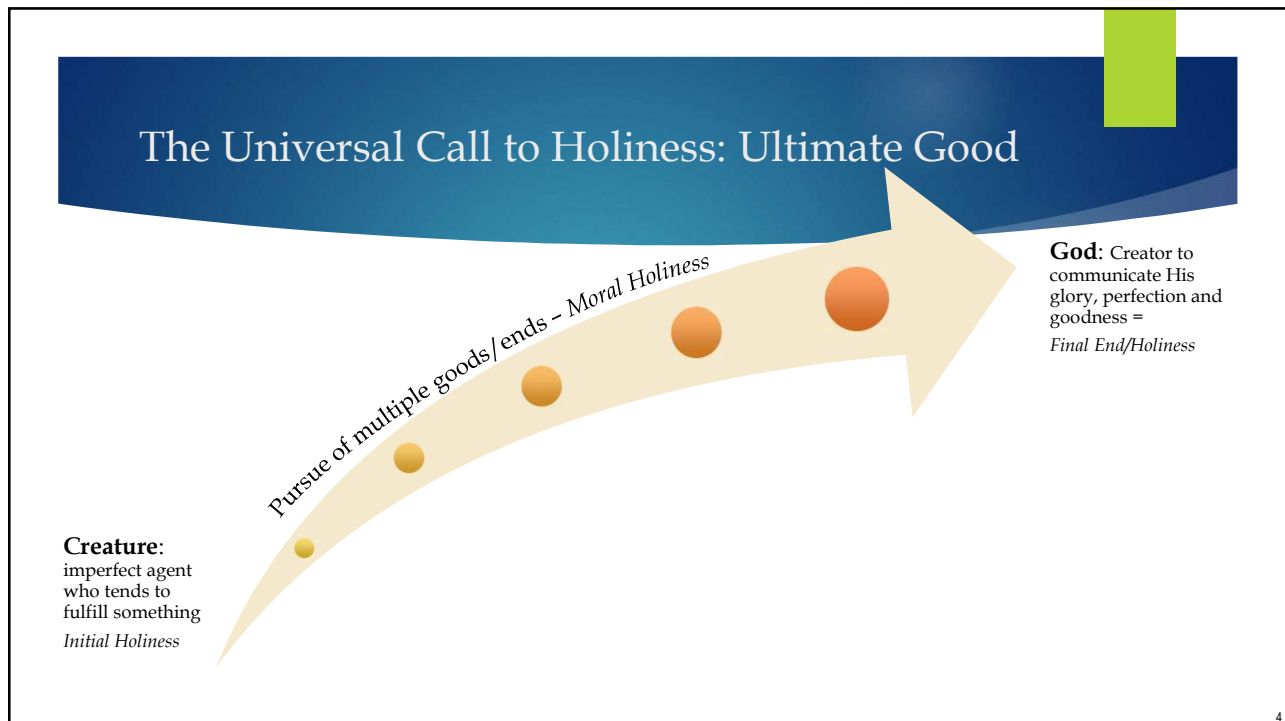
**7. CONSCIENCE**

2

2



3



4

# Natural Moral Law

### Definition



- ▶ The light of the understanding given to us by God in creation insofar as it permits us to discern what must be done and what must be avoided. (Cf. CCC, §1954–1955)
- ▶ “The **natural law is itself the eternal law**, implanted in beings endowed with reason, and inclining them *towards their right action and end*; it is none other than the eternal reason of the Creator and Ruler of the universe.” (VS, §44)

#### Natural Inclinations

- Conservation of being
- Self-defense
- Nutrition
- Reproduction and care of offspring
- Reason
- Metaphysical transcendence
- Etc.

#### Human Goods

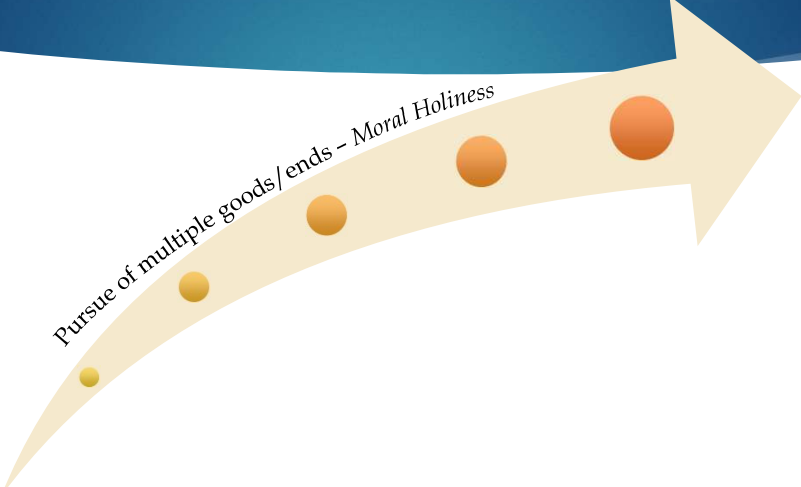
- Life, nourishment
- Family/marriage
- sexuality, work
- friendship
- experience of beauty
- knowledge
- Religion
- Being reasonable
- Etc.

5

# The Universal Call to Holiness: Ultimate Good

**Creature:**  
imperfect agent who tends to fulfill something  
*Initial Holiness*




Pursue of multiple goods/ends - Moral Holiness

**God:** Creator to communicate His glory, perfection and goodness =  
*Final End/Holiness*

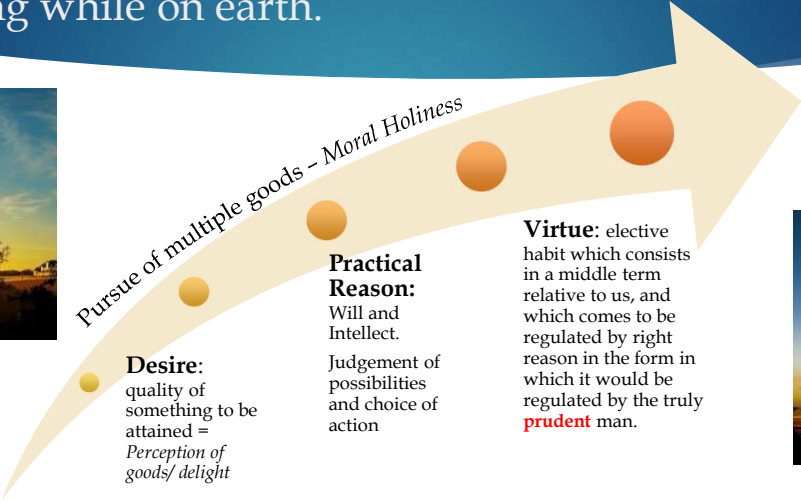
6

## Moral Holiness: The purpose of the human being while on earth.




**Human Person:**  
Naturally inclined to fulfill human purpose

*Pursue of multiple goods - Moral Holiness*



**Human Act:** is an act that is performed with both knowledge and deliberation.



**Desire:** quality of something to be attained = Perception of goods/ delight

**Practical Reason:** Will and Intellect. Judgement of possibilities and choice of action

**Virtue:** elective habit which consists in a middle term relative to us, and which comes to be regulated by right reason in the form in which it would be regulated by the truly **prudent** man.





7

## Evaluation of the Human Act

The object of the Will is the perceived good (true or apparent)

**Direct Object:** it is desired, seen as mean to reach an end, and it is voluntary.

**Indirect Object:** it is foreseen as consequence but not desired.

Object Chosen	Intention	Moral Act	Circumstances
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Good</li> <li>• Good</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Good</li> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Good</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Bad</li> <li>• Good</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase or diminish the goodness/evilness of an act</li> <li>• Responsibility of the person</li> </ul>

8



# Evil ≠ Illicit ≠ Sin



## Moral Action

- Evil
- Evil
- Good
- Omission of evil
- Good



## Consequences

- Evil
- Good
- Unforseen Evil
- Evil
- Forseen Evil



## Imputability

- Responsible
- Unmeritorious
- Non responsible
- Non responsible
- Double Effect

9



**The Principle of Double Effect:** conditions to perform or omit a licit action with a foreseen evil consequence.

- The performed act must be good in itself or indifferent
- Good effects cannot be accomplished through evil actions
- The person must directly will the good (good intention/end)
- There must be proportionality between the good intention and the foreseen evil

**Proportionality:** the good effect must be more important than



- The gravity the tolerated evil
- Proximity between the good act and the evil foreseen
- The certainty of the evil effect
- The role of the person acting

10

## Mortal Sin

*aversio a Deo and conversio ad creaturas.*

For a sin to be mortal, it requires three simultaneously conditions: grave matter, full advertence, and perfect consent

Effects of Sin

• Grace/life

• Harmony: tendencies, passions, intellect, will


• Nature

• Community, One Body

11

## Catholic Social Doctrine Principles

### Human Dignity



- ▶ Dignity means that in any situation or circumstance, the person cannot be used as an instrument in order to get ends that are external to his/her own development.
- ▶ It is the foundation or the minimum expression. This means that every human person has the right to not suffer a degrading treatment from others or from society. This dimension is indispensable; not even the worst criminal can lose this fundamental dimension of humanity.
- ▶ It means that every human being has received a call to moral excellence. Everyone should express his/her own dignity through a virtuous life (CSDC, §133-134).

12

## Catholic Social Doctrine Principles

### The Common Good



- ▶ « The sum total of those conditions of social life which allow people, either as social groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily» (GS, §26).

13

## Catholic Social Doctrine Principles

### Solidarity

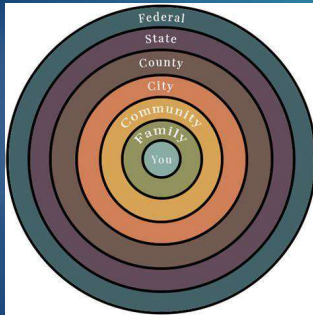


- ▶ As a principle, it affirms that «man with his brothers is obliged to contribute to the common good of society at all its levels» (CDF, Instruction *Liberatis conscientia*, 1986, §73).
- ▶ As virtue, is «a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; it means contribution to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all» (SRS, §38).

14

## Catholic Social Doctrine Principles

### Subsidiarity



- ▶ «A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good» (*Centesimus Annus*, §48).

15

## Christ: Principle of new life

### A gradual process of self-giving

it begins to be expressed as a battle against **sin** and concupiscence;  
 a progressive clarification of **conscience**;  
 an effort to interiorize the normative directions of the **natural moral law**;  
 an education of the capacity of judgment, of the will, and of the sentiments;  
 a correction of our attitude in the face of earthly goods;  
 constant recourse to the means of sanctification;  
 an acceptance of the demands of fraternal charity;  
 and an effort to not be led away by discouragement.



16



## Recommended Bibliography

- ▶ Rhonheimer, Martin. *The perspective of morality : philosophical foundations of Thomistic virtue ethics*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011.
- ▶ Colom, Enrique and Angel Rodriguez-Luno. *Chosen in Christ to be Saints: Fundamental Moral Theology*. Rome, Italy: University of the Holy Cross, 2014.