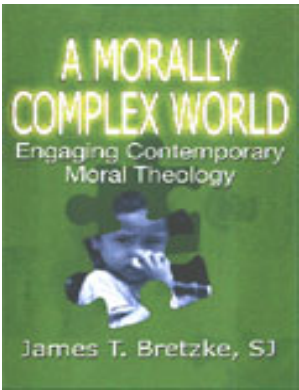


Finding the Key  
For Our Lives  
In a →

Presented by  
Rev. James T.  
Bretzke, S.J., S.T.D.

bretzkesj@usfca.edu



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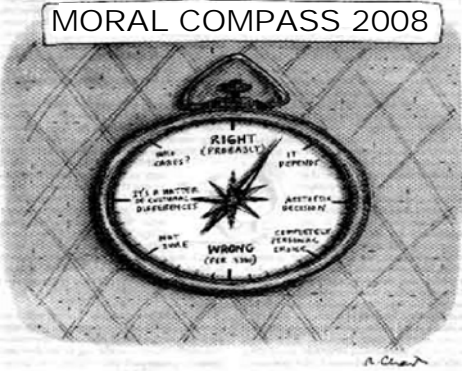
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MORAL COMPASS 2008



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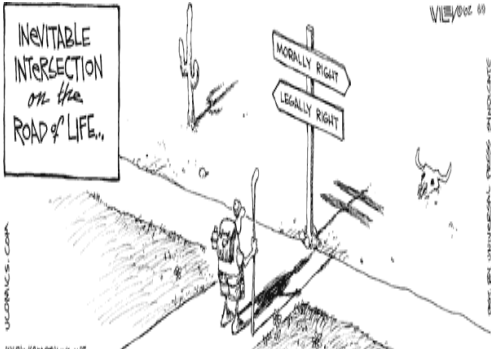
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Facing Life's Moral Dilemmas

INEVITABLE  
INTERSECTION  
on the  
ROAD of LIFE..



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## Some Starting Questions

- Who Do We See Ourselves To Be?
- How Do We Look Upon God?
- How Do We Consider Right & Wrong?
- How Do We Consider Sin?
- What Should Our Response To Sin Be?
- How Do We Live In The World?

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## Christian Anthropology

- A unique being (individual)
- Created by God & designed for God (transcendent)
- Made in the Image of God (dignity)
- An Embodied Spirit (historical, concrete)
- United in Christ & a Trinitarian God
- And a social being (relational)

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## Human Freedom

- Freedom is the indispensable criterion for morality (cf. *Veritatis Splendor* #34)
- Essential for human dignity (cf. *VS* #86)
- Two aspects of Freedom:
  - Freedom from (liberty)
  - Freedom for (authenticity)
- Finitude and human freedom

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## Moral Freedom

- Basic (core): ability to determine ourselves before what we hold to be Absolute (God or non-God)
- Moral (categorical): ability to recognize, choose, and instantiate individual moral values or disvalues (good and evil)

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## Moral Autonomy

- “Auto” + “nomos” (self + law)
- Does *NOT* mean “creating” one’s own moral law
- But rather discovering the “law” written by God on the human heart (cf. *Gaudium et spes* #16)
- And then obeying that inner law
- This is the function of conscience

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## Sources & Methodology for Moral Theology

- Scripture: The Sacred Text
- Tradition: The wisdom of the community
- Human Experience
- Rational Reflection on the Truly Human

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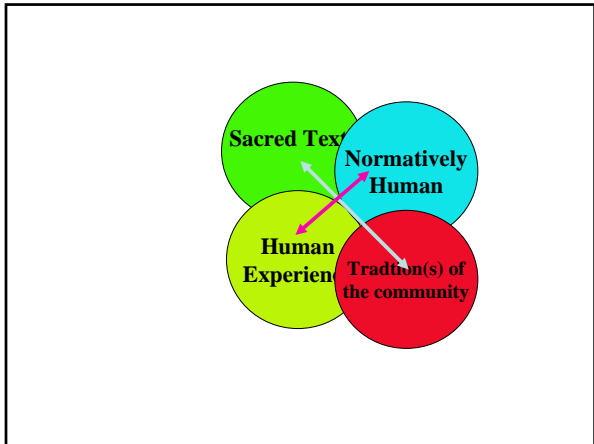
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### Summary of the Moral Sources

- The Sacred Claim Axis
  - Scripture
  - Tradition
- The Reason Claim Axis
  - Data from Human Experience
  - Understanding of Normatively Human
- Both Axes Operate in Each Person

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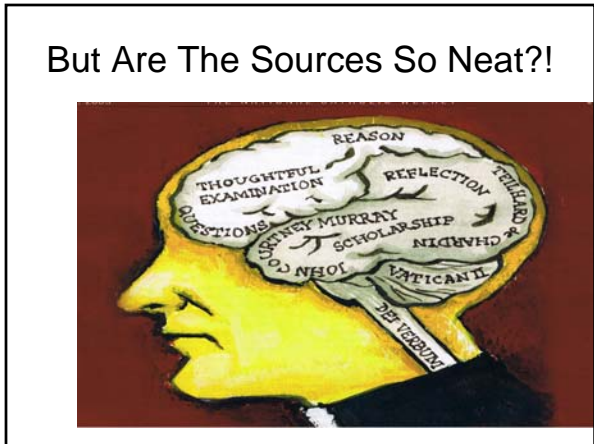
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### Source Content Questions

- What is *used*, and why?
- What is *ignored*, and why?
- What is *rejected*, and why?
- What is *reinterpreted*, and why?
- Which source(s) is (are) **decisive** when there is a conflict, and why?

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### Two Basic Moral Theories

- Deontology (duty-based)
- Teleology (goal-based)

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### Moral Theory #1: Deontology

- The word "deontological" comes from the Greek *δεον*, [deon] which means "duty."
- Deontological ethical theory stresses clear moral norms which establish parameters, or limits, of what must not be done (prohibitions and proscriptions)
- as well as prescriptions of what must be done.
- The latter are given as moral duties which often indicate at least a certain basic minimum set of moral expectations

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## Moral Theory #2: Teleology

- Comes from  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ , [telos] the Greek word for "end."
- In general teleological ethics stresses two aspects of a moral telos,
  - end-as-goal, which should orient proper moral action, and
  - end-as-ideal, which furnishes a goal and a vision which supports us in our ethical growth and moral striving

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## *Contra Naturam*

- "Against nature"
- Not against the "laws of nature"
- But against the "nature" or purpose of a faculty of the human person
- Thus, contraception was wrong since it frustrated the "nature" of sexual relations in blocking procreation.

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## Further Points on Teleology

- stresses the "becoming" aspect of our moral nature,
  - such as genuine moral growth and integration, often expressed in terms of moral character, and what aids this process, such as an understanding of our moral identity (e.g. as disciples of Jesus),
  - coupled with a guiding moral vision, which in turn is sustained and nourished by the virtues to be cultivated and the vices to work against and to root out.

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## Teleology and Discernment

- In moral conflict situations:
  - i.e., in cases when one is confronted with the dilemma of having two or more "evils,"
  - one must always choose the lesser evil, or when faced with two or more options which seem to be good, then one must choose the better one.

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## A Last Reminder

- The foregoing discussion has been situated largely along the "Rational Claim" axis, moving from human experience to an understanding of the normatively human
- Both poles of this axis (human experience and reason) are indispensable
- However, for Christians, the Sacred Claim axis of Scripture and Tradition must also play a role in our moral reasoning.

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## Natural Law & Moral Norms

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## Distinctions Between Natural Law And Law of Nature

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural law deals with morality and character, e.g. right/wrong</li> <li>• Natural law depends for its existence on human beings AND God</li> <li>• Natural law's "objectivity" needs careful understanding and can <i>only</i> be discovered <i>within</i> the realm of human moral being (conscience)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws of nature deal with the physical universe, e.g. gravity</li> <li>• Laws of nature are "objective" and bind irrespective of human beings (e.g. gravity binds even without humans)</li> <li>• Law of nature can be discovered by scientific analysis of the world outside of us.</li> </ul> |
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## Location of the Law

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Natural Law</b></li> <li>• Location is primarily <i>within</i> the human person(s) in their relation to God</li> <li>• It is not "out there" in the sense of the chemical periodic table of elements</li> <li>• <b>Thomas says it is "inscribed" on the human heart (<i>Lex indita non scripta</i>)</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Law of Nature</b></li> <li>• Location is primarily outside in the operations of the physical universe</li> <li>• Thus, the law of nature is discovered through science and/or observation of the physical universe and its properties</li> <li>• A morally bad person could be a gifted chemist, etc.</li> </ul> |
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## Examples of {Im}Possibility

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Law</li> <li>• Going to confession = possible for many; difficult for some</li> <li>• Confessing to one's son (a priest) = difficult for some; "morally impossible" for others</li> <li>• One set of rules does <i>not</i> necessarily fit all (cf. <i>ST 1-II, Q. 94, art. 4</i>)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law of Nature</li> <li>• <math>\text{NaCl} + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{Possible}</math></li> <li>• <math>\text{Au} + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{Very difficult}</math></li> <li>• <math>\text{Au} + \text{NaCl} = \text{Impossible?}</math></li> <li>• One set of rules fits all</li> </ul> |
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## {IM}POSSIBILITY

- **Natural Law**
- Impossibility refers primarily to *moral* impossibility, which is *necessarily* subjective (i.e., related to an individual subject)
- Thus what is morally "possible" for one individual may be morally *impossible* for another
- Moral possibility/impossibility is more difficult to determine, since it is *necessarily* subjective.
- **Law of Nature**
- Impossibility refers to the basic laws of physics, chemistry, biology, etc. which are "objective" and apply to all
- What is physically impossible is fairly easy to determine.
- Thus birds can fly under their own power, but humans cannot

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## 6 Claims of the Natural Law

- Ontological Claim
- Normative Claim
- Universalist Claim
- Epistemological Claim
- Normable Claim
- Universalizable Claim

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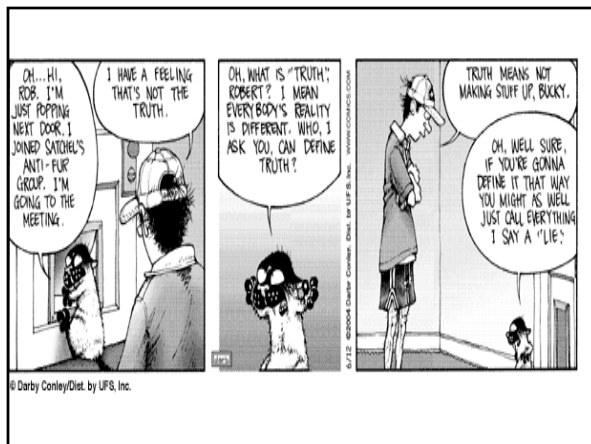
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## The Ontological Claim

- There is, in *some* sense, an objective moral order
- Grounded in a human nature
- Which indicates a certain way of being
- And activities consonant with that being
- As well as actions and ways of being not in accord with that nature

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## The Epistemological Claim

- Not only does this order exist, but we can in *some* real and significant sense "know" it
- I.e., we can know both the nature of human being
- And those actions which are consistent with human flourishing
- As well as those which are incompatible with human flourishing

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### The Normable Claim

- This claim builds on the **epistemological** claim
- It asserts that our moral knowledge can be formulated in a certain way, in terms of moral norms
- I.e., that certain actions or behaviors are fashioned in terms of prescriptions and proscriptions

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### The Normative Claim

- This claim is a further specification of the **ontological** claim (the objective moral order)
- And this claim flows from the “normable” claim grounded in the epistemological claim
- I.e., that the moral order “is” in a certain way, that we can norm our knowledge, and that these norms in fact are binding on us.

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### The Universalizable Claim

- This builds on the *epistemological* and *normable* claims
- I.e., not only can we “know” the moral order in some real sense, and that we can fashion this knowledge in terms of moral norms
- But these norms can be *expressed* as universal claims, thus these norms are “universalizable”
- I.e., norms expressed as binding on all peoples and in all times and in all places

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### The Universalist Claim

- If the moral order actually exists (ontological claim) and is normative on us
- And if we can both know it and norm moral actions in this order in terms of universalizable norms
- Then at least some of these moral norms will in fact be universal
- They will be applicable to us and to all others

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## Natural Law Claims Summary

<b>ONTOLOGICAL CLAIM:</b> The Objective Moral Order Exists	<b>EPISTEMOLOGICAL CLAIM:</b> We Can Know It In Some Real Sense
<i>Normative Claim:</i> We must follow the moral norms of this objective moral order	<i>Normable Claim:</i> This moral order can be expressed as moral norms
<i>Universalist Claim:</i> Some of these moral norms bind all peoples in all times in some way	<i>Universalizable Claim:</i> Some of these moral norms can be formulated to apply to all peoples

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### The Natural Law in St. Thomas

- Principle of *exitus et reditus* (all comes from and returns to God)
- Notion of law in general: ordinance of reason promulgated by a competent ruler for the common good)
- Human participation in God's eternal law
- A *lex indita non scripta* (inscribed on the human heart)
- Distinctions of speculative and practical reason

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### Right Reason (*Recta Ratio*) in Thomas Aquinas

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speculative Reason</b></li> <li>• Abstract, "logical" truth</li> <li>• "Necessarily" true</li> <li>• Universally true for all</li> <li>• Exercise of logical wisdom and reasoning</li> <li>• Some examples...</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Practical Reason</b></li> <li>• Reason put into concrete practice</li> <li>• Affected by "contingency"</li> <li>• Affected by "fallibility"</li> <li>• <i>Not</i> universally true for all in the <i>same</i> way</li> <li>• Exercise of <i>prudential</i> wisdom</li> <li>• Some examples...</li> </ul> |
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Translating the Natural Law Into Action:  
Moral Norms

- Universal principles {Speculative Reason}
- Middle Axioms {Speculative & Practical Reason combined}
- Concrete Material Norms {Primarily practical reason}

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Universal Moral Principles

- ***Bonum est faciendum et prosequendum et malum vitandum*** (ST I-II, q. 94)
- The good is to be done and fostered, and evil avoided
- Look carefully at the grammar...
- Knowable by all as principles of truth, according to speculative reason
- E.g., Drive safely, as in the following?! ➡

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Even at the Level of Universal Precept "Error" Is Still Possible!

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YES AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DO HAVE TO TAKE EVERYTHING AS BLACK OR WHITE

Though, Is *EVERY* Moral Decision *ALWAYS* Clear-Cut Black and White?

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### Concrete Middle Axioms

- Moral norms which are generally true and not easily altered
- *Lex valet ut in pluribus* (the law/norm is valid “in most cases”)
- Yet, according to circumstance and time these norms might be changed or have “exceptions”
- E.g., drive according to the speed limit

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SUDDENLY I HAVE AN URGE TO JUGGLE MACHETES...

ABSOLUTELY NO MACHETE JUGGLING

THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN NATURE

We should note the “natural” human resistance to norms

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## Concrete Material Norms

- Particular and specific, often tied to a particular understanding of time and/or circumstance
- These may be “incomplete” and/or necessary to alter according to time or place
- Thus, more “fallible” and more “contingent”
- E.g., drive 15 mph in a school zone

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## Levels of Moral Norms Summary

- Universal Precepts
- Middle Axioms
- Concrete Material Norms
- *Always* binding, expressed as abstract truths, such as “drive safely”
- *Generally* true, in most cases (*ut in pluribus*) but exceptions exist
- Apply to a specific situation but are more open to both *change* and *fallibility*

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What Kind of a Rule is This? Universal Precept or ?  
Is There Something We Need to Know, like “Circumstances”



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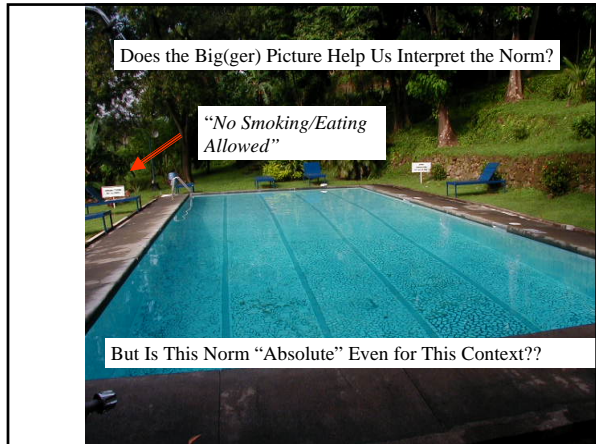
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## Overview of Human Moral Agency

- Keep in mind that for genuine, human moral action we must *never* separate the human agent from the actions s/he performs
- Recall that as humans we are embodied spirit which means we must live in the concrete world
- Therefore our moral lives must be grounded and evaluated in reference to our real-life situation
- As Christians we believe that our lived response to our situation is best seen in terms of discipleship

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## A Basic Distinction

- *Actus hominis...*
  - “Act of man” which does NOT involve freedom and intention
  - E.g., the brakes fail on my rental car and an accident ensues in which a bystander is seriously injured
  - Not a “moral act” since it lacks freedom and intention
- *Actus humanus*
  - “act of the human person” which is a moral act
  - Done in freedom
  - With an intention (or “end”) in mind
  - Guided by reason

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## “Fonts of Morality”

Action *in se* (“objective” aspect of the act)

Intention of the moral agent

Circumstances in which the agent’s intention was made and in which the action was performed

While in the tradition these aspects were treated “separately,” in reality they exist *only* together, and “simultaneously”

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## Catechism of the Catholic Church

- 1755 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").

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## The Goal of the Moral Act

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Finis Operis</i></li><li>• The "end" (goal) of the act in itself</li><li>• E.g., surgery to remove a tumor</li><li>• Has as its "end" the health of the patient</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Finis Operantis</i></li><li>• The "end" of the agent performing the act</li><li>• E.g., doctor who performs the surgery</li><li>• Wishes to remove the tumor</li><li>• And restore the patient to health</li></ul> |
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## "Good" and "Right"

- If both the *Finis operis* and the *Finis operantis* are morally correct we have a morally right act which strengthens the moral goodness of the agent
- However, what happens when one *Finis* is correct and the other incorrect?
- E.g., "doing the right thing for the wrong reasons" (or vice versa)?
- Some illustrative examples...

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## A Historical Moral Debate

- **Peter Lombard:** The *Finis operis* provides the evaluation of the moral act, *without* reference to the *Finis operantis* of the agent
- Counter-position of **Thomas Aquinas:** *Finis operis semper reducitur in finem operantis* (The act's moral end is always found ultimately in the agent's intention in performing the act)

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## A Note on Thomas' Position

- This position focuses moral meaning primarily and essentially in the moral agent
- We can still evaluate the "effects" of a moral action and call them "right" or beneficial
- But the judgment about moral goodness can be made *only* in reference to a human person as moral agent,
- Therefore, the *Finis operantis* is absolutely key

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## Or In Other Words...

- Consideration of the agent's intention is indispensable to the evaluation of any moral act
- There are no "free-floating" *moral acts* whose moral evaluation can be made without reference to the agent, and therefore the agent's intention and circumstances
- Cf. Thomas Aquinas: *ST I-II q. 18 (On Human Acts)*

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## The Debate Continues

- While the position of Thomas Aquinas is generally accepted in “theory”
- There remain sharp ongoing debates as to the application of this theory in practice in certain complex situations
- Especially those which might seem to have more than one *Finis operantis* or *Finis operis*

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## Moving from Natural Law to Personal Application

- The natural law is only a “law” by analogy, *not* by direct apprehension
- Thus, it functions *like* a law does, *not* as a law does
- The Catholic moral tradition has *always* recognized that application in the concrete is evaluated *primarily* in terms of the individual as subjective moral agent

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## Ontological Difference between Abstract & Material Norms

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abstract norms arise out of <i>speculative</i> reason</li><li>• These will tend to be universally true</li><li>• Less open to change</li><li>• Though with time there can be refinement</li><li>• E.g. certain human rights</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Material norms apply <i>practical</i> reason to a concrete situation</li><li>• The concrete situation will always be to some extent <i>unique</i></li><li>• Therefore, there will <i>necessarily</i> be differences and exceptions with these concrete material norms</li></ul> |
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### Epistemological Difference: Abstract & Material Norms

- Abstract norms since they are based in *speculative* reason can be universally true and knowable by all with sufficient reflection
- Material norms since they are exercises of *practical* reason will be more *fallible*, less accepted, and more *changeable* (contingent)

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### Parting Shots....

- The preceding is based on Thomas Aquinas
- Be careful *not* to confuse abstract norms for concrete material norms, or vice versa
- Many of the contemporary debates come down to a disagreement over whether a given norm is truly abstract or concrete
- If abstract it should be universally true
- If concrete it's open to *fallibility* [*incompleteness*] and *contingency* [*change*]

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### From Judgment to Action

Traditional Moral Principles for  
Making  
Moral Decisions

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### Recall *Contra Naturam*

- “Against nature”
- Not against the “laws of nature”
- But against the “nature” or purpose of a faculty of the human person
- Thus, contraception was wrong since it frustrated the “nature” of sexual relations in blocking procreation.

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### *Deus impossibilia non iubet*

- "God does not command of humans things which are impossible to do"
- Thus, God's grace was understood to always be present to enable people to do the morally correct thing.
- E.g., as used in 1930 in *Casti Connubii* by Pope Pius XI to condemn the practice of contraception.
- Yet, we must keep in mind that if something is *impossible* then it *cannot* be commanded by God.

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### The Virtue of Epikeia

- From the Greek word for “fitting”
- Source of some debate among medieval theologians, some of which saw it as a grudging “dispensation”
- But according to Thomas it is “virtue” which ought to become habitual
- Since it seeks to “perfect” the law

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### 3 Applications of Epikeia

- To correct an *impossible* law
- To correct an *inhuman* law
- To correct a law which did not foresee this particular set of *circumstances* (the so-called “reading the mind of the legislator”)
- Some examples of each...

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### *Epikeia* & the Natural Law

- Traditionally epikeia was applied only to *human* laws, since being human were often imperfect
- The natural law, as grounded in God’s eternal law, was seen as “off-limits” for epikeia since God’s laws would not be imperfect
- Yet it has been debated that since nature itself does change over time this would require changes in the natural law so that it would more truly reflect God’s creative will

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### Principle of Totality

- *Pars Propter Totum*: The Part may be “sacrificed” for the good of the whole
- Originally viewed only in terms of the individual, physical body (e.g., amputation to save one’s life)
- Later expanded to include a personalist dimension (e.g., “Steel Magnolias”)

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## Principle of the Double Effect

- Used in moral quandary situations
- Long tradition in moral theology
- Founded in Thomas Aquinas' teaching on legitimate self-defense (*ST II-II, q. 64, n. 7*)
- Source of much "casuistry" over the centuries
- Which has led to debate and revision

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## Definition of the Double Effect

- *One* action with two *foreseen* consequences,
- Of which one is "good" and intended (desired effect of the action)
- And the other is "bad" and *tolerated*
- The moral question was under what circumstances could one cause, tolerate, and/or allow the bad effect

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## 4 Traditional Criteria of the Double Effect Principle

- Act "directly" performed is "good"
- The "good" accomplished is at least as "immediate" as the evil which occurs; the evil effect may *never* come *before* the good effect
- The "intention" of the agent is good
- There is "proportionate" reason for causing the evil effect

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## Example of the Ectopic Pregnancy

- Definition/Description of the pathology
- Illustration of the earlier medical therapy
- Discussion of the earlier debate
- Revision of the Principle's Application
- New medical therapies available
- New moral debate

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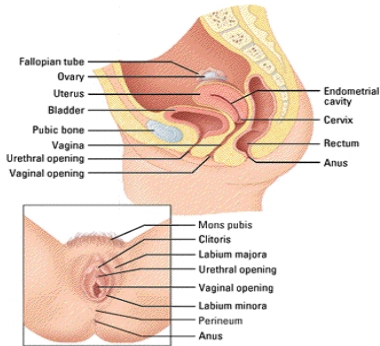
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## Female Reproductive System



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## Proportionate Reason Is Key

- Recall that the natural law in its *application* is a work of the *practical reason*
- In quandary cases such as the double effect the presence of "proportionate reason" keeps the evil caused on the "ontic" level
- However, lack of proportionate reason would make the evil caused disproportionate, and therefore immoral

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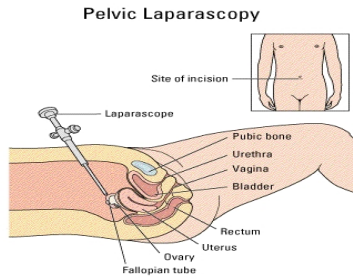
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## Newer Therapy for Ectopic Pregnancy



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## Discerning Proportionate Reason

- Solving for the “variable” ontic evil
- $2x + 3 = 9$  [e.g., do nothing in ectopic pregnancy: mother dies]
- $2x + 3 = 7$  [e.g., remove fallopian tube: major surgery, loss of tube]
- $2x + 3 = 5$  [e.g., do laparoscopic minor surgery; minor surgery, tube maintained]
- In *all cases* the “constant [3]” is the death of the fetus
- The “variable” [x] is the other composite ontic evil effects in the various medical options

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## A Revision of the 4 Criteria

- The act in itself must be morally good
- No *morally evil* means may be used; *ontic evil* though is allowed
- The intention of the agent must be good
- There must be proportionate reason for allowing/causing the *ontic evil* involved.

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## Comparison of 2 Versions

- *Traditional Version*
  - The act is morally good
  - The evil caused must be *subsequent* or *simultaneous* (never prior) to the good effect
  - The agent's intention is good
  - There is proportionate reason for causing the evil
- *Revised Version*
  - The act is morally good
  - No *morally evil* means may be used; ontic evil is allowed
  - The agent's intention is good
  - There is proportionate reason for causing the ontic evil

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## Dispute over Direct/Indirect

- Direct in terms of *Finis Operis*?
- Direct in terms of *Finis Operantis*?
- What is the *Finis Operantis* in complex actions?
- What is the *Finis Operis* in complex situations?
- What is the distinction between "Direct" and "Indirect"?

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## Moral and Ontic Evil

- Moral evil is *always* wrong,
- *but* this depends on a *composite* analysis of
  - The act itself,
  - The intention of the agent
  - The circumstances
- Ontic evil refers to evil in the world, which is not moral
- Other terms are pre-moral or physical
- Ontic evil can be caused or allowed,
- But only for proportionate reason

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## Competing Moral Paradigms

- Only God Can Know the Whole of Reality
- Thus for the rest of us this knowledge is necessarily incomplete and partial
- We tend to understand complex realities according to models and paradigms
- Physicalist paradigm & Personalist paradigm
- Strengths and weaknesses of both paradigms
- Necessary Openness to Revision of All Paradigms!

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## The Physicalist Paradigm

- Moral obligation comes from following the physical or “natural” structure of the given “faculty”
- Thus, for the “faculty” of speech one must always communicate the truth
- To do otherwise would be to accept *contra naturam* [against the nature] of the faculty

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## Physicalist Paradigm View of Sexuality and Sexual Ethics

- Look at the nature of the sexual faculty
- Ordered to procreation, in marriage context
- Focus on the individual “act”
- Therefore, each and every sexual act and expression should be open to the possibility of procreation; anything that obstructs this is intrinsically disordered (*contra naturam*)
- Key value is following this “nature”

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## Personalist Paradigm

- Begins with the individual human person
- In his or her concrete situation
- Looking at his or her personal attributes, needs, goals, desires
- Pays special attention to the relations with others (especially close relations)
- All these to some extent will be unique

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## Personalist Paradigm View of Sexuality and Sexual Ethics

- Looks at the individual *and* the couple in their whole, concrete situation
- Stresses the relational aspects, especially love and “responsible parenthood”
- Evaluates single acts within this total context
- Key values are personal and interpersonal flourishing

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## Bob & Carol; Ted & Alice

- DINKs: Gen X, Double Income, No Kids!
- Desire to maintain a certain life-style
- Artificial contraception is the most convenient means of avoiding children
- Mid-40's, married for 20 years, 5 children:
- College freshman, 2 in high school, one in grade school, one Down's syndrome
- Alice advised to have no more children
- Have tried (unsuccessfully) NFP

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## Where Do We Go From Here?

- Morality is always and only lived in the concrete
- Therefore, individuals must discern, decide, and act, in freedom, in order to be moral
- Traditionally this is where conscience comes into play

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## 3 Legs of Moral Discernment



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## Criteria for Moral Discourse



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## Six "C's" of Moral Discourse

- Comprehensive (to the situation)
- Comprehensible (to the target audience)
- Consistent (internally and externally)
- Credible (dialogical and realistic)
- Convincing (to the target audience)
- Christian (the ultimate "test" criterion)

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### **1<sup>st</sup> C: Comprehensive**

- **Comprehensive** in relation to the issue and problem, i.e does it treat the problem and issue in its complexity and completeness?
- Are there aspects, etc., which tend to be ignored, condemned as irrelevant, etc.?
- .Move to a "thick" description rather than simply a "thin" description of the issue.

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### **2<sup>nd</sup> C: Comprehensible**

- Is the mode of discourse comprehensible by a wide variety of people coming from different backgrounds and faith traditions?
- Does it use philosophical and/or religious concepts which people use and understand?
- .Be careful, especially in pastoral work, of using too much "jargon"; yet, make sure that key concepts are understood
- It is incumbent on **us** to make ourselves understood

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### **3<sup>rd</sup> C: Consistent/Coherent**

- Are the modes of argumentation and positions taken internally **coherent**
- And externally **consistent** with similar issues, cases, etc.?
- Examples of being “pro-life” but against welfare for children
- Or for animal rights AND abortion on demand

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### **4<sup>th</sup> C: Credible**

- in the sense of being "believable" by all sides involved in a debate/issue, etc., such that we could admit that a person of sound reason could logically hold this position
- We need to be careful to treat counter-arguments **also** in a credible fashion, i.e representing these positions fairly and not caricaturing them,
- And asking that our opponents do the same for us.

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### **5<sup>th</sup> C: Convincing**

- Modes of argumentation that move from being merely credible to one that convinces, in the light of counter-arguments, treated fairly
- Does the argument convince me/others? Why? or why not?
- If an argument or line of reasoning does not convince, then what is our further response? Repeat it, more loudly? Use sanctions of authority or coercion?
- Or revisit and reform the argument?

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### **6<sup>th</sup> C: Christian**

- Does the moral discourse, position, theory, response, application, etc. take into account the *Christian* nature of our moral life?
- Does it take into account adequately the aspects of Christian theology, such as sin and forgiveness, in the context of grace, the Cross, Redemption, Resurrection, Eschatology? the Community of (imperfect) disciples in a Pilgrim Church?
- This sixth "C" does integrate and critique the first 5 "C"s

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### **Bring it all together**

- Both Axes, Sacred and Rational Claim
- Six C's of Moral Discourse
- Our Christian understanding of moral goodness grounded in our relationship with God

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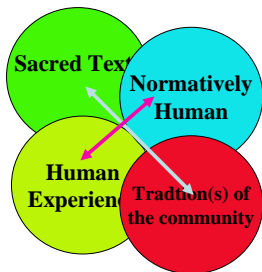
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### **Recall Our Methodology of Moral Theology**



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## What Might Shift?

- If we move to integrate the Sacred Claim Axis, what might change?
- Different emphases?
- Different insights?
- Different pastoral responses?



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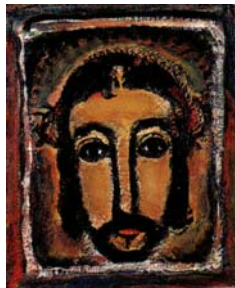
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## Neither the Answers Nor the Processes Are Simple....

- Need for genuine search for the truth
- Need for openness to the Spirit *wherever* it moves
- Need for prayer
- Need for dialogue



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## A Final Word...

- *In fide, unitas; in dubiis, libertas; in omnibus, caritas*
  - "In faith, unity; in doubt, liberty; in all things, charity."
  - Attributed to St. Augustine, this is an important principle of Christian discernment: unity in faith is important, but in cases of doubt a plurality of opinions and practices should be allowed, and the over-riding principle must always be charity towards each other.

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