

LIFE IN CHRIST

Part I--Human Dignity



"Let us make man in our image."

"Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."

CCC 1691

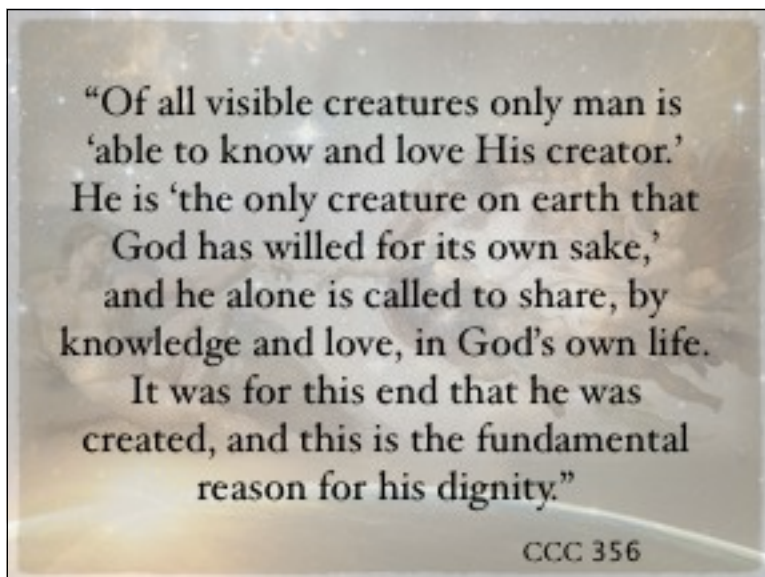
Call to Freedom



"You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." --St. Augustine







Man's dignity rooted in creation

- * Image and likeness of God
CCC 1701-1715
- * Vocation to beatitude
CCC 1716-1729
- * Free Choice---Capable of Moral Action
CCC 1716-1729
- * Passions dispose man to beatitude
CCC 1762-1775

Man's dignity rooted in creation

- * Conscience – man discovers a law he must obey
CCC 1776-1802
- * Virtue – disposition to do the good
CCC 1803-1845
- * Sin - in freedom he can choose against God
CCC 1846-1876
- * Grace & Mercy – Christ frees us from sin
CCC 1965-1974

Dignity of the Human Person

1) Composed of physical body and a spiritual and immortal soul

- * No soul without a body
- * No living body without a soul

2) Soul is substantial form of the body

- * Form: makes a thing what it is

3) Man – a bridge between two worlds

- * Physical world – above the animals
- * Spiritual world – below the angels and God

Acting for an end...

According to Aristotle, not only intelligent being, but every creature acts for an end:

- * Pencil's end – as instrument of intelligible being – to write;
- * Tree's end – “treeness” – tall, shady, full branches and leaves;
- * Pig's end – “pigness” – eat, sleep, wallow in the mud



And Man???? What is man's end???

MAN'S END..

Happiness

“There is no doubt about it. We all want to be happy....So let us see if we can find the best way to achieve it....” -St. Augustine

Happiness?

- * Wealth
- * Honor
- * Fame
- * Glory
- * Power
- * Bodily good
- * Pleasure



"In man there is an inextinguishable yearning for the infinite. None of the answers attempted are sufficient. Only the God himself who became finite in order to open our finiteness and lead us to the breadth of his infiniteness responds to the question of our being."

(Ratzinger "Relativism: The Central Problem for Faith Today")

Come, follow me...

I AM

*the
WAY*

*the
TRUTH*

*the
LIFE*

Sources of Morality



"Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

(Mk. 10:17-31)

Source #1: Natural Law

- * "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts." -Romans 2:14-16
- * Man participates in the wisdom and goodness of the Creator who gives him mastery over his acts and the ability to govern himself with a view to the true and the good. CCC 1954
- * "God has placed the desire for happiness in the heart of every man..." Father Servais Pinckaers, O.P.

Source #2: Scripture

The Old Testament – The Old Law

- * The Ten Commandments
- * Freedom "from" evil...
- * To Moses on Mt. Sinai
- * Land, descendants...

The New Testament – The New Law



- * The Beatitudes...
- * Given on a mountain
- * Freedom "for" the good...
- * Promise of eternal life

Catechetical Elements:

--Teaching the Ten Commandments

- * First necessary step on journey to freedom (VS #13)
- * Discuss concrete actions (and more)
- * Different emphases at different ages
- * Catechesis more than just "thou shalt not" --- guide to holiness
- * Based upon creation – man's dignity, made in the image and likeness of God



"Good Master, what must I do?"

"If you wish to be perfect..."

Moral Perfection

*"No longer I who live but
Christ liveth in me."
Galatians 2:20*



Beatitudes invite us to moral perfection!

Popular Objections:

- * "These are impossible demands!"
- * "Only for an elite group!"
- * "Outdated - just for Jesus' time!"
- * "Utopian - not practical!"

"No longer I who live but Christ liveth in me." Galatians 2:20



OR ---"Paradoxical Promises"

- * ...which reveal the vocation of every Christian
- * Confront us with decisive moral choices
- * Not freedom from... but freedom to...
- * Attitudes, disposition (VS #16)
- * Require mature, human freedom!!!!

"For freedom's sake you have been set free..."

CCC #1716

Source #3: Tradition

- Fathers of the Church
- Doctors of the Church
- Magisterium: teaching office of the Church
- Councils: Trent, Vatican Council II
- Church Documents: *Humanae Vitae*, *Veritatis Splendor*, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*...
- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Code of Canon Law



Freedom

Freedom resides in the will alone.
Act of the will informed by the intellect.

Modern misunderstanding
of "freedom":

Freedom
of indifference.
(license to do anything)



Freedom for excellence:

"For freedom's sake you have been set free..."

- Power of reason and will
- Rooted in inclinations to truth / to good
- to act freely with excellence
- to act for perfection whenever one wishes



Freedom and sin.

Man's freedom is limited and fallible. In fact, man failed. He freely sinned. By refusing God's plan of love, he deceived himself and became a slave to sin.

CCC 1739

"For freedom's sake you have been set free..."

Genuine Freedom

"Genuine freedom is an outstanding manifestation of the divine image in man. For God willed that man should be 'left in the power 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."

[VS 34; GS 17; St. 15.14]

CCC 1730

"Freedom makes 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."

CCC #1749

Acts of Humans or Human Acts?

Act of Man – *actus hominis*

- * blinking, heart pumping, ties
- * purely mechanical, bodily actions

Human act – *actus humanus*

- * engaging human will
- * voluntary – able to be judged



Evaluating Human Acts

- * Object
– the thing done
- * Intention
– purpose, motive
- * Circumstance
– elements
surrounding the event

= *a morally good act!*



CCC 1750

The Morally Evil Act

At least one, possibly more
of the sources is evil.

*“There are acts which, in and of themselves,
independently of circumstances and intentions,
are always gravely illicit by reason of their
object; such as blasphemy and perjury, murder
and adultery.”*

CCC 1756

Intrinsically Evil Acts

"Reason attests that there are objects of the human act which are **by their nature "incapable of being ordered" to God**, because they **radically contradict the good of the person made in his image**. These are the acts which, in the Church's moral tradition, have been termed **"intrinsically evil"** (*intrinsece malum*)...

(Veritatis Splendor, n. 80-81)

CCC 1753

Consequentialism / Proportionalism

- * Claims that "rightness" or "goodness" of an act comes from intention.
 - * Considers the "proportion" between "good effect" and "bad effect."
 - * Decisions can be based upon the "lesser evil" or the "greater good."
 - * If the consequences are good, then I can perform even an evil act.
- "The end justifies the means."



Call to Freedom



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