

FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MORAL LIFE

USCC chapters 23-24

The Human Person

Created

Imago Dei – the image of God (Genesis 1)

Reason – to know the natural law

Free will – to choose the good freely

Fallen

(The image remains, but with hindrance)

Ignorance – difficulty in knowing the truth

Concupiscence – inclination to disordered love (sin)

The Decalogue

Given

To Israel in Exodus and Deuteronomy

First Table – commands pertaining to God (1-3)

Second Table – commands pertaining to other people (4-10)

Perfectred

By Christ in the gospels

Greatest Commandment – Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength

Second greatest – Love your neighbor as your self

The Precepts of the Church

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

The Precepts (USCC 334-335)

- Attend mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
(also refrain from unnecessary work)
- Confess sins at least once a year
- Receive the Eucharist at least during Easter season
- Observe prescribed days of fasting and abstinence
- Provide for the needs of the Church (time, talent, treasure)

Who is sufficient for these things?

- We cannot keep the Law due to our sin and weakness
- But God gives us grace through the Sacraments, sourced in the Paschal Mystery
- God keeps the Law through us, so that our works are both divine (done by the Holy Spirit) and human (done with our free consent)
- Divine- makes them worthy of eternal life
- Human- makes them truly ours



The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb
from the Ghent Altarpiece
by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck

The Tools of the Moral Life: Making Moral Decisions

Sin: “An utterance, deed,
or desire contrary to the
eternal law”

-Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 22

(see USCC 312 and CCC 1849)

3 conditions for a mortal sin:

(USCC 313):

- Grave matter
- Full knowledge
- Deliberate consent (freedom)
- ▣ All 3 must be present for a sin to be mortal
- ▣ Other sins are venial
- ▣ See 1 John 5:17

The Tools of the Moral Life: Making Moral Decisions

3 elements of a moral act (USCC 311-312):

- Objective act (what)
 - Subjective goal or intention (why)
 - Concrete circumstances (who, when, etc.)
- ▣ All 3 must be good for an act to be good

Conscience: “a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act” (CCC 1796; see also USCC 314)



The Tools of the Moral Life: Making Moral Decisions

How to form your conscience (USCC 314)

- ▣ Internalize the Word of God
- ▣ Learn from the advice and example of others
- ▣ Submit to the teaching of the Church
- ▣ Receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit (through the sacraments)
- ▣ Regularly examine your conscience

How to follow your conscience (USCC 315)

- ▣ Follow a certain conscience
- ▣ Change an incorrect conscience
- ▣ Do not act with a doubtful conscience

The Tools of the Moral Life: Habits to cultivate or destroy

7 virtues

4 cardinal virtues:

- ▣ Prudence
- ▣ Justice
- ▣ Fortitude
- ▣ Temperance

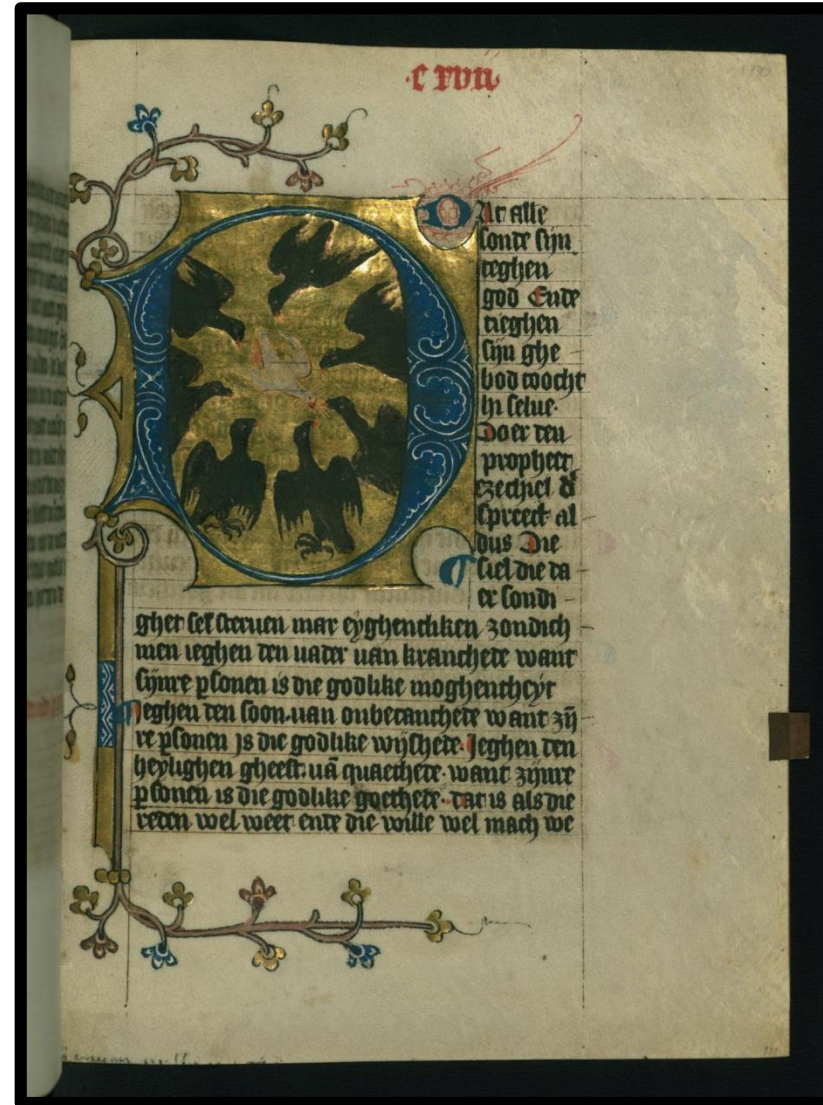
3 theological virtues:

- ▣ Faith
- ▣ Hope
- ▣ Love

The Tools of the Moral Life: Habits to cultivate or destroy

7 deadly sins

- ▣ Pride
- ▣ Avarice (Greed)
- ▣ Envy
- ▣ Anger
- ▣ Lust
- ▣ Gluttony
- ▣ Sloth



The Holy Spirit and the Seven Deadly Sins flouriated initial from a 15th century German manuscript

The Tools of the Moral Life: Living in society

The common good: “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and easily” (CCC 1924; cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 26.1 and USCC 326)

The principle of subsidiarity: “Governments should help and support individuals and groups for whom they are responsible without controlling their freedom and initiative” (USCC 326; cf. CCC 1883)

Foundations of the Christian Moral Life: Questions?