

## **The Institute for Catechesis and Formation** **ICF 105 – Christian Morality**

### Welcome and introductions...

*This course provides a basic introduction to the fundamental teachings of Catholic morality and its foundations in Sacred Scripture, Tradition and Natural Law. Participants will examine virtue, conscience formation and apply moral theology to contemporary moral issues in the areas of health care and human sexuality*

**Texts:** Introduction to Catholicism for Adults, Rev. James Socias (ICA)  
**Supplemental Reading:**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC): <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>

The Bible: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>

We will be using these sources, or at least the material will be derived from them. I will also try to utilize many of the fine discussion questions that the ICA places at the end of each chapter.

So let's see how we can find a balance between discussing the material, but not venture down discussions that get us hopelessly off topic. We will also not be able to solve all the world's problems, but it is my sincere hope that we can place them in proper context and provide insight.

I also have many stories that I will try to intertwine into the material. I will also augment any material with comments that I have found useful in teaching this material in the past. I will always be orthodox (right teaching), but as the Catholic Church has never, and neither will She ever exhaustively declare authoritative in all matters. Some ways in terms of approach and method come down to style and temperament, that do not effect the doctrine. That's not the same as simply saying it's all opinion. This will be easier to grasp with a concrete example, so we'll leave it at this: I promise in the end, you will not be confused as to what the Church teaches.

I also want you to know (this is important) that I will do my best to contrast what the Christ has revealed through His Church to what the world presents to us. In the end, I hope you will realize just how radical the love that Christ wills for us really is for the world. You will hopefully come to understand terms or phrases such as, “light in the darkness,” “disciple of Christ,” “child of God,” “priest, prophet and king,” “baptized” in a new radical way, and realize that union with God is never simply “getting into heaven.”

## **Week 1: Dignity of the Human Person – Man created in the Image and likeness of God**

ICA Chapters 17, pp. 573-615

### **What does it mean to live the moral life?**

I think the first answer that comes to mind is ‘being good’. Although it is true that as God is good, we are called to be good too, but being ‘good’ isn’t the mission of a Christian, nor is it sufficient for us to be one with Him in Heaven. We’re not Boy Scouts. The goodness we are called to is a Person.

So we must conform ourselves to Christ. That is what we are ‘built’ to do. The famous quote from the first book of Augustine’s *Confessions*, “we are restless until our heart finds rest in you Lord.” The truth is that we often can’t pinpoint what exactly will bring resolution to our inner restlessness. In other words, although we know it is Christ whom alone can satisfy our restlessness, how does that play out in the concrete living we find ourselves in?

It begins with conversion. Conversion is a radical reorientation away from evil and toward God. This is the fundamental option that we all must make. But that is not enough, because as we know, life is not summed up with one choice, but is determined by our moral acts.

So in moral theology (here’s a definition), we study human acts so as to direct them to a loving vision of God seen as our true and complete happiness and our final end. This vision is attained by means of grace, the virtues and the gifts, in light of revelation and reason.

Now let's begin by looking at the source within us of that restlessness. The reason why only God can fulfill our restlessness is that as we are made in His image, His image in us is at war with the world - the fallen state that we find ourselves in after our first parents (Adam and Eve) ate from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

**Imago Dei – image of God** (CCC 355-359)

God creates us to be like Him, in His image and likeness: analogy in communion of persons, self-gift, unity in difference. We image God in ourselves, and in the communion of persons.

Man and woman have the capacity for God (*capax Dei*, i.e., we are capable of receiving God). The human person is unlike any other creature on the earth, having a status and a vocation that no other creature has: to be like God. Being like God means to love.

God created man and woman to have a share in His creative power (cf. Gn. 1:28) and in His kingship by giving them dominion over the earth (cf. Gn. 1:26).

I would like to list, for comparison reasons, some of the attributes of *imago Dei* and to contrast them with the world's perspective.

Explain and expand where appropriate:

Image Dei

Rational  
 Free Will  
 Incarnate  
 Relational  
 Contingent on God  
 Supernaturally Oriented

The World's Culture

Slave to Instincts  
 Determinism  
 Only Interior is Important  
 Individualistic  
 Existence is Separate from a Creator  
 You Only Live Once

And may I add...we are built for sacrifice as gift! But I won't develop that here.

**Freedom** (CCC 1731)

Freedom properly understood is to use one's ability and will to choose what is good and what God wills for our lives and act accordingly. Free will is at the very heart of the

human person's place in creation. Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought. Bl. John Paul II

Rather than autonomy, as Catholic our understanding of freedom is "the ability to do that which we were designed to do." There is a few things to grasp there...

- We are designed.
- We can know that design.
- Only in knowing that design, and yielding to it can we be free.

Allow me to offer an illustration...

Consider a train on the tracks, one that can talk (we'll use Thomas the Tank Engine). Thomas moves along the tracks and as pretty as the scenery is, Thomas is envious of not being able to enjoy the beach he passes by, or to experience the woods and hills he traverses through. So Thomas asks to go on the beach. But on the sand he realized that he cannot move, his wheels were not designed for the loose sand. So he wants to try the hills, but realizes his axils are not designed to maneuver amid the trees and he gets stuck where it is not even. So back to the tracks, where he was designed to be...only there can he move 'freely' because it was for that alone that he was designed.

Now we get this point easily when it comes to nutrition and our physical health. Our bodies were not designed to sit in a chair all day eating chips and watching TV. We know the effects of a poor diet and a sedentary life. We, at least on some level, attempt to match what we freely do and eat with what we can know of the design of our physical bodies.

But it is not as easy with the spiritual. Perhaps that is as it should be. As important as it is to eat healthy, it is closer to our nature to be spiritually healthy. It's more personal and must be chosen freely.

**Authentic freedom is oriented toward the Good and Truth.** (3 Jn 1:11 - Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does what is good is of God; whoever does what is evil has never seen God; Jn 14:6 - Jesus said to him, 'I am the way and the truth and the life'; Jn 8:31-32 - If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.)

I don't know how else to interpret "if you remain in my word" than to understand that it first a choice, and then something that is conditional on our present and future acts. It is how we determine our very human person.

We determine ourselves through our **freely chosen acts**. Our acts give definition to who we are as moral beings, and in relation to God and others. We freely choose actions, but we, ourselves, do not determine if these acts are good or bad (moral or immoral).

These 'good and bad' acts are not up to us to determine. Wasn't that the issue with Adam and Eve? Didn't they attempt to cross the boundary of their radical otherness than God. That is determined by God alone, and since God is One, the truth to which we must ascent is one, i.e., it is objective.

There is an objective moral order – what is right and what is wrong (what is good and for our fulfillment, and what is bad for us and stifles our ability to flourish.) We are all moral actors and we need guidelines. God reveals what is good (and for our good) and what is bad (and will not lead us to our fulfillment).

I spoke to you briefly about freedom. If we assert, as the world does, that freedom is autonomy, than we find that it is direct conflict with law. In other words, the greater the law, the less the autonomy. The greater the autonomy, the less there is law. But this is based on that false understanding of freedom. If freedom is connected to design, than the 'law' simply safeguards man from the dangers of moving outside of his design. In our automobiles, we change the oil every 3-4000 miles. That is the 'law' of the 'designer'. If someone where to assert their autonomy and instead of oil, fill their car with molasses, it would not work with the design of the car. We wouldn't call that person free, we would call that person a pedestrian.

But this isn't easy for us to choose right, to not just understand our design but align ourselves with it in our moral life. In other words it is easy for us to sin.

**Concupiscence** is the inclination to sin. St. John's first letter (1 John 2: 16-17) describes the three-fold concupiscence:

I want to refine that definition of concupiscence. It is a tendency, but more so it is a "disorder between our desires (appetites) and our reason". I know (reason) that that piece of cake before dinner is not good physically for me, but my disordered

desire wins and I eat it. This is very clear, and we'll visit this again after the break when we discuss the Cardinal Virtues. The virtue of Temperance regulates those things we need (food and sex), and it's usually very clear to us how we struggle with disordered desires in both cases. My mother used to always say to me, "Your mind is willing, but your body is weak." How true!

For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world. Yet the world and its enticement are passing away. But whoever does the will of God remains forever.

- **Sensual lust:** an inordinate desire for physical gratification.

Sensual lust is a perversion of something good and necessary. Recall that being made *imago Dei*, man is not a slave to his instincts. That being said it is easy to recognize how this is and can be a struggle.

We can also recall that from the Yahwist mythos in Genesis, not only did Adam and Eve necessarily 'cover' themselves from the lustful gaze of the other, but God Himself fashioned aprons for them to wear. This fact demonstrates God recognizing the need to protect aspects of our body that are closely identified with our nature and vocation.

Something that is not associated with this sin, but permeates all of these concupiscible sins is that the other is objectified, i.e, they are treated as a means to an end.

In Dante's *Inferno*, those souls who were damned for carnal sins such as these, are placed in the second circle of Hell, just one below Limbo or where the virtuous un-baptized are placed. Now this isn't Church doctrine, it is Dante. And yes there's no Limbo, but the explanation is interesting as to why the lustful are at this level. First, the sin is damnable as a sin against the Sixth Commandment. And it is listed as a sin of those who "betrayed reason for their appetite." The punishment depicted (for Dante it always fits the crime) is that the lustful spend all of eternity being whipped about in a tempest. As they were unable to control their passions in life, so they will have no rudder (reason) in the afterlife. But we may ask why this sin only warrants the 'Second Circle' of Hell. Even though it is the opposite of love (to will the good for the other), lust (willing the good for

one's self) is the closest to love. So it is not an inversion, but a 'missing the mark'. It is also a necessity for the human person, and one that since it involves another, is never only the fault of one individual.

It is true that lustful sins are the most prominent. They may even be the reason for the majority of people to walk away from the Body of Christ and lose the state of grace, i.e., the reason many go to Hell. But since Satan is such a good liar, many who have overcome the lustful urges think they're home safe. We focus on this sin of sensual lust because it's an easy one to identify, even if it's not an easy one to overcome. But we do so at our own peril...let's look at the lust of greed and covetousness.

- **Lust of the eyes:** greed or covetousness

I Timothy 6:10 - money (avarice) is the root of all evil. Avarice or Greed is wider and encompasses "spending without measure". It is the excess of right reason not adequately applied to the moderate use of money for its intended purpose.

Continuing with the insight from Dante, the Greedy inhabit the 'Fourth Circle' of Hell. Speak as to why?

There was a 4th century Latin poet, named Aurelius Prudentius who wrote a poem entitled *Psychomachia* (Battle of the Soul). *In nuce*, this poem depicts a personification of a war between the virtues and the vices. There's one section where there are the soldier vices and virtues who had been slain or injured are laying about, and a haggard old woman (the personification of Greed) is going about pillaging the spoils of those who had fallen. As the priests came to tend to the virtues, Greed was tempting them, but without any success. To counter this, the ugly and easily recognizable Greed changed her appearance to a beautiful woman, now personifying Thrift. This then tempted the clergy.

Isn't Satan a great Liar? We live in houses that are nearly three times the size of the average house in the 1950's (the average now is 2400 sq. ft.). How do we justify such wealth? We're very clever in convincing ourselves.

- **Pride of life** – arrogance or ostentation in lifestyle that reflects a willful independence from God and others

Okay, so money is the root of all evil, but we spend so much time looking for security our salaries, our bank accounts, our 401Ks and retirement funds, our stockpiles of food stuff (its not just the 'preppers' you know), cars, houses, vacations, etc. Now, these are objective 'goods' so we may ask why not pursue them? But Satan never appears, or at least knows it's ineffective to appear as the grotesque and easily recognizable evil. Satan, being such a great Liar usually tempts us (*harmatia* is to miss the mark) with a perversion of a actual good.

Use as an example the story of my own experience when I was without good health insurance, they thought my wife had a pulmonary embolism, my oldest daughter was pregnant outside of wedlock, my other daughter had spots on her lung, they thought might be tuberculosis. There was a malfunction on a piece of equipment that would require a couple thousand dollars repair and my business would be shut down until it was repaired and due to a recent storm, a small section of my roof was damaged. I was walking up my hill to the house asking God, actually scolding him, that He needs to give me more grace. Since I was always attracted to the prayer, the Our Father, I began praying it. When I got to the line, "give us this day our daily bread" He stopped me. He said, not audibly, that I have never ever meant that. I was convicted. I think I meant "give us today enough bread for a month, or longer. I wanted security. I was convinced that I should be able to make my life secure. That is pride. We all have to work that out.

Has anyone seen the movie, the "Devil's Advocate"? Here's the plot...spoiler alert!! A young lawyer who is the unknown player in a scheme to help bring evil personified into the world is defending a child molester all know is guilty. But the man's pride will not allow him to lose this case...he's never lost one. His court room skills gets the man acquitted, and he is brought to New York and lured with a large apartment and many perks by Satan himself (played by Al Pacino). In the end, he overcomes the allure of the ostentatious lifestyle and immediately finds himself back in time at the court room where he was defending that child molester. This time, at the risk of loosing his law license by refusing to represent the child molester; he does the right thing. Now the reporter who first wanted the 'scoop' about this upcoming talented lawyer goes to the lawyer at a different

angle. He wants to do a story on the 'lawyer with a conscience'. At first the lawyer declines, but eventually relents and says he would be interviewed tomorrow. As the reporter turns away, his appearance morphs into the Satan character (Al Pacino). He winks and says, "Pride, it's always been my favorite."

Now let's look at how to 'divide' this out. How to determine or delineate what is and what is not objectively evil to combat concupiscence; that is Law.

### **Eternal Law, Natural Law, Divine Law**

I like to begin with definitions. So let's define Law. A law is an ordinance of reason, for the common good, by one who has proper authority and it is promulgated. (Briefly parse out that definition).

St. Thomas Aquinas:

**Eternal law** – "The plan of divine wisdom as directing all acts and movements."

**Eternal Law is the law in God's own mind. This is the Logos.**

**Natural law** – "The rational creature's participation in the eternal law."

**Natural Law is the law written on the heart of man, and is a participation in Eternal Law...more on this shortly.**

**Divine law** – "The natural law as explicitly revealed by God in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. "

**Divine Law is the law 'positively' revealed to man. It includes the Old and New Testament and the Tradition that preserves what has been revealed.**

**Natural law:** do what is good and avoid evil.

Jer 31:33: But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Rom 2: 13-16: For it is not those who hear the law who are just in the sight of God; rather, those who observe the law will be justified. For when the Gentiles who do not have the law by nature observe the prescriptions of the law, they are a law for themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that the demands of the

law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge people's hidden works through Christ Jesus.

Natural Law is the law which we 'cannot not know'. It leaves the Atheist, the Jew, the Moslem, the Agnostic, the Catholic, etc., without excuse for not following what they 'cannot not know'. What the right thing to do was written on the heart, it is knowable and by it will they (we) be judged.

By the way, bringing back Dante, these are known as the virtuous Pagans and occupy the first level of Hell, remember me mentioning that?

### **The Moral Act (CCC 1750-1756)**

Now, since morality has to do with directing our moral acts lovingly towards God, let's explore the moral act. I'll read them as they are listed, and then explain them separately.

The moral act is comprised of three elements:

- **Object:** the act freely chosen here and now
- **Intention:** the motive behind the act freely chosen
- **Circumstance:** the situation in which the act is done; the factors surrounding the act.

### The moral object...

The moral object is the 'what' of what we are doing. It is the primary way that a moral act is determined. It is not just the description of the physical aspects of the act. For example, we need to distinguish the difference between conjugal love, adultery, homosexual intercourse and fornication.

The object of the act of conjugal love not just the 'reproductive act'. It is always the totality of the act. Why this is important is that without understanding this very important point, it would allow the intention of the person to be the most important. Think of contraception; if the object would simply be to avoid a pregnancy, than we would fall to have the

intention (is there a good reason to use) to determine the morality of the object.

The moral intention...

The moral intention is the 'why' of what we are doing. Although the intention by itself cannot determine the morality of the act, it is ultimately very important.

For example, although we would concur that a man and woman married to each other who are engaged in the conjugal act (object) is good, we would not want the intention to be something selfish, say the woman was thinking of the handsome guy at work. So we have to mean what we do and it has to be morally good.

The moral circumstances...

The moral circumstances are the 'who, when and where' of what we are doing. Here it true that even when the object and the intention are both good, they can be undone by being done in the wrong place, at the wrong time or involve the wrong group of people.

For example, Two people married to each other, engaged in the conjugal act with the intention of giving themselves faithfully and fruitfully to each other need to be in an environment appropriate to the intimacy of the act, i.e., there are inappropriate places (say public) for the act.

To be a morally good act, all of these elements must be morally good.

Then the important point here is that each moral font must be good, all three that is, not just one. So this is in direct opposition to Consequentialism (the end justifies the mean) or Proportionalism (the good out weighs the bad). First we consider the object, then the intention and the circumstances. All three must be morally good for the act to be morally good or licit.

As persons, we are a body/soul unity, possessed of the powers to reason and act (intellect and will).

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Is a person who is unaware of the moral law bound by the moral law? Under what circumstances, if any, would such a person be guilty of sin?
2. Often moral choices are not between an overwhelmingly good act and an inordinately evil act; we are sometimes uncertain as to how we should act. Explain what a person should do when a choice leaves him or her confused about the right course of action.
3. Discuss some aspects of modern culture that encourage evil acts. Identify some 'structures of sin' that exist, both in your country and around the world.

The students, with the teacher than should participate in a class-wide discussion.

----- **10 MINUTE BREAK** -----

Now, before we move into speaking about the virtues, let's briefly cover 'temptation' and 'errors of conscience'.

- **Temptation**

All people share in the one human nature that was weakened by Original Sin; all people are vulnerable to temptation. The nature of temptation will be discussed and its causes. What are the means by which we are tempted? Temptation occurs in three phases: suggestion, complacency and consent. How do we overcome temptation? How can we deal with it?

Suggestion - this is that first thought or idea that enters our mind and hearts. This is where it is easiest to combat and resist. There is no culpability at the level of suggestion, i.e, it is not a sin. For example, the young men and women always want to know how far you can go in thinking about someone before it becomes a sin. There's nothing hard and fast obviously, but I suggest that when the thought becomes a movie, you've gone too far.

Complacency - At the level of complacency, we are losing the ability to recognize that the suggestion has moved too far, i.e., we may not fully realize the temptation which is in front of us. This is certainly the near occasion of sin.

Consent - At the level of consent, we have abandoned the resistance and voluntarily submit to the thought, word, deed or omission.

The virtue that fortifies man against such incremental wooing by Satan is humility. To simply know we are not sufficient in terms of strength, and to fully recognize our own shortcomings so that we may avoid those 'areas' in our life where our weaknesses may be exploited.

- **Errors of Conscience** – Moral relativism – Judging an action from a subjective perspective is a rejection of Christian morality. Common forms are Situation Ethics, Consequentialism and Proportionalism.

The errors of conscience revolve around 'how' we recognize a thing as 'good-licit' or 'bad-illicit'. The book offers three different, or should we say competing ethical systems...let's briefly take a look at them and their principle founder or proponent.

Consequentialism (John Stewart Mill) - With Consequentialism, the outcome is the determining factor for the licitness of the act. In other words, the end justifies the means. Here one is not overly concerned with the circumstances or an objective moral law

Proportionalism (Jeremy Bentham) - With Proportionalism, the outcome is determined by weighing the good and the bad, and achieving the most good for the most people.

Situation Ethics (Joseph Fletcher) - With Situation Ethics, the one true moral good is love. To determine what course to take in any ethical situation, one must choose the greatest love which is determined by the circumstances. Here, both love and justice are the same. This is a form of consequentialism. Euthanasia would be a prime example of applied situational ethics.

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.

Let us now conclude the first session with the Virtues.

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 theological virtues are of God. They appear as a triad in complete form in the Pauline letters. One example is in I Thes. 1:3 - Remember before God your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. This cannot be fully attained except by grace. I have placed them in order in terms of a hierarchy.

- The **theological virtues** are Faith, Hope and Charity. These refer to God and are given us by Him through grace. (CCC 1812-13)
  - **Charity** (Love) – love of God, neighbor and self.

A classic Thomistic definition of love is to the will the good of the other for God's sake.

And without diminishing that, it is a radical emptying of God to man and a return of man to God. Love sustains us. We are made in love and for love.

And love is a concrete act; consider the spiritual and corporeal works of mercy. Remember the Scripture verse, "if we have not love..."

- **Faith** – belief in God and all He has told and revealed to us.

Faith is absolute fidelity to the Word as it has been revealed to man. Faith requires belief, but they're not exactly the same. The material object of faith is truth.

We would say that Faith requires belief as its primary act. But faith requires action...it is man acting on his beliefs. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit that perfect it are understanding, knowledge and wisdom. So we could glean from that the opposites of those gifts which would appear as the vices. The opposite of understanding is dullness of mind, the opposite of knowledge is ignorance and the opposite of wisdom is foolishness.

St. Thomas Aquinas would hold that his is primarily an intellectual capacity of man, but Bl. Duns Scotus would understand it to emanate from man's will.

- **Hope** – a desire for God and the kingdom of heaven, and realizing we cannot do anything simply of our own strength.

Hope is a firm expectation in a future possible good. The material object of hope is God.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit that perfect hope are Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord. So we can glean the opposites here; of Fortitude we are confronted with fear, of Piety the opposing vice is hardness of heart and against Fear of the Lord stands pride and arrogance.

- The **Cardinal Virtues** are the four principle moral virtues:

The Cardinal virtues are the 'hinge' virtues. There are four...

- **Prudence** – the virtue that allows us to make right judgments.

Prudence is right reason applied to an action. It is the mother of all virtues, as without it none of the other could ever be realized.

Although I didn't speak about the 'parts' of virtues, it's important here. There are three potential parts of Prudence; they allow the virtue to be attained (the other are the subjective parts - genus to a species {domestic, individual, etc.} and integral, which are quasi-virtues necessary to complete the virtue {memory, acumen, foresight, etc.})

But the potential parts are Deliberation (counsel), Judgment and Command. This in fact is how one forms his or her conscience. If you do not know what the prudent thing to do is, then ask a prudent person.

I want to mention two 'false resemblances' to prudence. The first is 'craftiness'. Craftiness is the use of guile and fraud, but often appear as well thought-out and prudent. Here perhaps we could think of the business person who is thought to be clever. The world often admires this person. The second is 'carnal prudence'. Here we may think of the person who is successful in terms of worldly affairs.

- **Justice** – the constant and permanent determination to give everyone his or her rightful due.

Justice is giving the other his or her due. It is not the same of giving the other what is theirs.

Aquinas actually place the virtue of 'religion' under the cardinal virtue of justice. Religion then would be giving God His due.

The vices opposed to Justice would be 'talebearing' which is to spread gossip of a questionable nature. Another would be 'calumny' which is to spread gossip of a known truth, but the other person has no right to that information. A third would be 'derision' which is to ridicule or bring shame to another.

- **Fortitude** – allows us to overcome fear and remain steady on our will in the face of obstacles.

Fortitude is endurance in the pursuit of a difficult good.

Its potential parts include 'patience' and 'perseverance'. Vices opposed to fortitude include cowardice (can't endure the hardships), the excess (fearlessness and recklessness), sloth (which is a spiritual sluggishness) and presumption (boldly arrogant).

There are also instances of 'mock courage' where the motivation may be anger or depression, or bounty seeking. One can also be ignorant of the danger or simply overly confident. These are not actual forms of courage.

- **Temperance** – restraint of our desires and passions; moderation, self-mastery.

The definition of temperance is properly ordered love of self.

This virtue regulates the basic requirements for biological life. The vices that threaten temperance are perversions of a necessary good - food and sex. Concerning sexual intercourse, the perversion could be natural (fornication or adultery) or unnatural (homosexual sex or masturbation).

The vices that threaten temperance are 'insensibility' (rejecting pleasure) or 'intemperance' (gluttony, lust, rape, brutality -inflicting pain, etc.).

There is a connection between what is morally good and the fulfillment of one's destiny – which is eternal life with God.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As we grow in virtue, we must learn to choose right acts and follow through with them—even when it is difficult—and to avoid choosing evil acts—even when we are tempted strongly. How do the Cardinal Virtues of fortitude and temperance help us to perform these complementary actions? What vices are obstacles to developing these virtues?
2. In Western society, it is admirable to take care of one's physical health. It requires discipline and in each city and town one can find gyms and fitness centers. Is that wrong? Why or why not? What do you think our stress on physical fitness means when compared to 'moral' fitness? What might be a good balance, and if choices must be made due to time constraints, what would fit our Catholic understanding of the human person?

The students, with the teacher than should participate in a class-wide discussion.