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Catholic Discipleship: Morality in the Public Square

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Scriptural Foundations

- Jesus: Mt. 25: 31 – 46
 - *“Whatsoever you do to the least of your brothers or sisters, you do to me.”*

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Scriptural Foundations

- Paul: Acts 9: 4
 - *“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute ME?”*

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Scriptural Foundations

- John: 1 Jn 4: 19-21
 - *“One who has no love the brother or sister they have seen cannot love the God they have not seen. The commandment we have from God is this: whoever loves God must also love their sister and brother.”*

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Theological Foundations

- 1. Every human being is created in the image of God:
 - IMAGO DEI
- 2. The COMMON GOOD.
- 3. A CONSISTENT ETHIC OF LIFE: no “ifs, ands or buts.”

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God’s Definition of the human person:

- Genesis 1:27
 - “God created them in his image; in the divine image he created them; male and female he created them.”
- Every person is: **IMAGO DEI** or THE IMAGE OF GOD.

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A Consistent Ethic of Life

- What is a Catholic supposed to think about the death penalty? Euthanasia?
- What is a Catholic supposed to think about the cloning of embryos? Abortion? In Vitro Fertilization? Embryonic Stem Cell Research?

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What is the Church’s “consistent ethic of life”?

- All human life is sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of **natural**

death.

10 Does the consistent ethic weaken the antiabortion message? NO!

- “If such great care must be taken to respect every life, even that of criminals and unjust aggressors ...all the more so in the case of weak and defenseless human beings...” (EV 57)

11 Christian Anthropology

- Human Life and dignity is “from God”
- Human dignity means humans can never be reduced to be mere “objects”
- How do I view others? Do I judge the worth of others by what they do? How much money they have? What kind of work they do?

12 Gaudium et Spes

- “In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of absolutely every person.....” 27

13 The Words of Jesus

- *As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brothers or sisters, you did it for me.”*
Mt. 25: 40

14 Morality and the “imago Dei”

- ...*the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards. These [are] based on the nature of the human person... (imago Dei)*
GS 51

15 Pope John Paul II

- ...*to kill a human being, in whom the image of God is present, is a particularly serious sin. Only God is the master of life!”* EV 55

16 The Consistent Ethic of Life

- 1 • **1. Points toward what is “objectively right”**
 - Meaning that every morally good action is consistent with our identity as the “imago Dei”
- 2 • **2. Points toward the “common good.”**
 - Meaning that every morally good action takes into consideration the needs of others before my own.

17 Pope John Paul II condemns:

- “Whatever is opposed to life itself...murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, ...subhuman living conditions, ..disgraceful living conditions....”

18 The Consistent Ethic of Life is about my concern for all my brothers and sisters

- “The Gospel of Life is for the whole of human society. To be actively pro-life is to contribute ... through the promotion of the common good.”
– EV 101

- 19 **The Consistent Ethic of Life**
- Cannot be interpreted in a way that is either:
 - Inconsistent or
 - Restricted
- 20 **Pope John Paul II**
- *“Thus the deepest element of God’s commandment is the requirement to show reverence and love for every person and the life of every person. EV 41*
- 21 **The Consistent Ethic of Life**
- IS NOT RESTRICTED TO ONLY “GOOD” OR “INNOCENT” LIVES BUT ENCOMPASSES ALL HUMAN LIVES FROM CONCEPTION TO NATURAL DEATH.
- 22 **John Paul II**
- “legitimate self-defense” is not
 - “first strike”
 - And
 - “bloodless means” should always be a Christians’ first choice
- 23 **Imago Dei: the anthropological foundation**
- *“Teachers, catechists and theologians have the task of emphasizing the anthropological reasons upon which respect for human life is based” EV82*
- 24 **St. Maria Goretti**
- At Maria’s canonization, her murderer, a 66 year old Alessandro Serenelli knelt among those present and cried tears of joy.
- 25 **Seven Themes from Catholic Social Teaching**
- 1. The life and Dignity of the Human Person.
 - 2. The Call to family, community, and participation.
 - 3. Rights and Responsibilities.
 - 4. Option for the poor and vulnerable.
 - 5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.
 - 6. Solidarity.
 - 7. Care for God’s Creation
- 26 **Faithful Citizenship**
- Make all political decisions after examining this issues through the lens of Scripture and Tradition.
 - Make all political decisions based on what is best for the “common good.”
 - Make all political decisions in favor of a “consistent ethic of life.”
- 27 **Moral Guidelines for Political Choices**
- 1. There is no distinction between the obligation to be a good citizen and the desire to be a good Catholic.
 - 2. The goals of politics and of the moral life overlap.
 - 3. Catholics are called to bring their faith to politics not their politics to their faith.

- 4. Catholics must follow their conscience in their political choices.

28 **Six Principles from our Bishops**

- 1. Every decision must be judged by whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.
- 2. Human dignity is only realized in community.
- 3. All people have a right to participate in society.
- 4. All members of society have an obligation to the poor and vulnerable.

29 **Six Principles con't.**

- 5. Human Rights are only the minimum conditions for life in society.
- 6. Society as a whole has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights.

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- *“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the World fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.”* Paul VI, 1971

31 **The End**