



LEGION OF MARY
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THE DOCTRINE ON CATHOLIC MORALITY

San Mateo County Comitium - Bro.
Gene Lopez and Sis. Lorna Garcia

Love as Basis of Catholic Morality



Let us begin this presentation with **LOVE as our center piece or basic foundation** from which we derive the principles of all our Catholic and Christian morality. For love brings forth our dignity (as we are created in the image of God) and thus because God is Love, we deserved to be loved and we must love God and neighbor.



GOD = LOVE

Love as Basis of Catholic Morality

This is the essence of Jesus' new Commandment. It emphasizes the value of the dignity of the human person through love as we are called to become partakers in God's nature. Love is not a mere sentiment or feeling – rather it is a principle of our Christian life that moves us to what is good for ourselves and for others. And that good is God.

Love as Basis of Catholic Morality

Morality is a call to recognize our dignity as men and women who have received a free gift of new life in Christ. *“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)*

Love as Basis of Catholic Morality

Our Lord himself clearly taught us the first principles of Catholic morality: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and the first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and prophets.” (Matthew 22: 37-40).

Love as Basis of Catholic Morality

The love of God and neighbor are therefore the source and summary of Catholic morality. This means that what love requires is the essence of all moral rules – all of the Ten Commandments and all the aspects of morality as spoken by the prophets and our Lord Jesus Christ himself.



The Love of God

The essential moral rule for right loving is to love according to reality. this means adoring god, loving persons, and using things. how are we to love God? Christ says: “with your whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength” (mk 12:30). God deserves total love, the love of worship and adoration, because of who and what he is: infinitely good and the creator of our very being. adoring things, or even human persons, is idolatry, and foolishness.

The Love of Neighbor

We are to love our neighbor “as ourselves,” that is, with the same kind of love with which we love ourselves. However, we may feel about ourselves at the moment, we always will our own good, our own best interest, our own true happiness; and we should do the same to others. This love is in our power, for it is a free choice, not a feeling.



The Love of Neighbor

We are **not commanded to like all men, for liking is a form of love that is not under our power. It is a feeling, not a voluntary choice. The reason we are commanded to love our neighbor is the same as the reason we are commanded to adore God – for He has given us a share in his Kingdom as a gift for He is good indeed.**

Love Versus Sentimentality

Love has often been romanticized in our society as a ‘feeling and sentiment’ towards the beloved from the lover. *But true and genuine Christian love goes beyond this, as love, according to Saint Thomas Aquinas is ‘to will the good of the other.’ This good is God and thus love presupposes our desire to a loving relationship that which leads us all towards God.*

Love Versus Sentimentality

“Scripturally and theologically the Christian moral life begins with a loving relationship with God, love made possible by the sacrifice of Christ. **The Commandments** and other moral rules are given to us as ways of protecting the values that foster love of God and others. They provide us with ways to express love, sometimes by forbidding whatever contradicts love. (USCCB)



Conditions of Morality (Free Will or Moral Freedom)

In the Garden of Eden, our parents, Adam and Eve were the beneficiaries of this grace and gift of free will – the use of one’s intellect to choose (*or will*) his or her human acts towards the good (or evil). Free will is the power of determining our own acts – the power of acting or not acting or doing one thing or another as we please.



Conditions of Morality (Free Will or Moral Freedom)

Free will also implies not choice without motives, but choice between motives. It is irrational to think that there is only one choice in human acts – but always choices within the range of our intellectual vision as experienced in our daily lives.

Conditions of Morality (Free Will or Moral Freedom)

Free will presupposes knowledge and the use of our intellect. In the Summa Theologica, Aquinas delved into this notion of free will and states that if a man's power is not free, all counsels, exhortations, commands, rewards and punishment will be meaningless. *Man does not always act on necessity but from choices that he alone could make because he is an intelligent being.*

Conditions of Morality (Free Will or Moral Freedom)

Man considers a course of action, seeks advice, judges that this way may be followed, changes his mind and decides on that way. Compared to an irrational creature like a dog or sheep, a man does not act on mere sense-judgement (or animal instinct) as it is proper to man to use the faculty of his intellect.

Free Will in the Light of Faith and Reason

Can scriptures prove the notion of free will? Yes. Moses said to the children of Israel: “I call Heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing – choose therefore life (Deut. 30.19). “Everlasting glory is promised to him, “who could have transgressed, who could do evil things, and hath not done them.” (Eccles 31.10).

Free Will in the Light of Faith and Reason

The Council of Trent solemnly declares this teaching: “If any one says that the free will of man does not cooperate in any way with the grace of God, and that it cannot resist the grace of God, but like a lifeless thing is merely passive, let him be anathema.”

The Law in General

The will of God is the end of life. If we do God's will, we shall infallibly attain our life's purpose which is eternal happiness. But how do we know the will of God? How is God's will manifested to us? **God must have provided some safe and certain rule to direct man's actions towards their last end.** That rule we call **MORAL LAW**. Law can be defined as the rule, norm or standard of our actions.

The Eternal Law

Eternal Law is the Divine Wisdom of God which oversees the common good and governs everything. Eternal law is God's plan to lead all creation towards God's eternal salvific plan to be holy and blameless before Him through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:4–5)

The Eternal Law

God, as “Being-itself”, is able to promulgate such a law as God the Creator’s reason is also perfect wisdom. Everything in nature reflects the Eternal Law in their own natures (S.T. I-IIae, 91, 2) *Things act according to their nature, so they derive their proper ends (final cause) according to the law written into their nature.*

Divine Law

Divine Law is the historical laws of Scripture given to us through God's self-revelation. Divine law is divided into the Old Law and the New Law, which correspond to the Old and New Testaments of the Bible (q91, a5). The Old Law, revealed by God to Moses, "is the first stage of revealed Law. Its moral prescriptions are summed up in the Ten Commandments" (CCC 1962). It has an extrinsic focus — motivated by fear — and promises earthly rewards (such as social peace. It expresses immediate conclusions of the natural moral law.

The Old and the New Law

The New Law perfects the Old Law. The New Law, through the teachings of Jesus — commands internal conduct — and reaches us by divine love — promising love and heavenly reward. The New Law “is the Holy Spirit given through faith in Christ, which heals and is expressed through love.” It gives interior strength to achieve what it teaches. It is also a written law found in Christ’s teachings (in the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, etc.) and in the moral catechesis of the apostles, summed up in the commandment of love.

The Natural Law

The natural law is the that law which God has written in the heart of man. In other words, it is the light of natural reason by which we discern what is good and what is evil – what is to be done and what it to be left undone – what leads to our last end, what does away from it – what is in accordance with the will of God and what is contrary to it.

The Natural Law

Under the principles of Natural Law there are three precepts of morality: we should worship God; we should control our sensual appetites; we should not do to others what we would not have them do to us.

A fourth maybe added: Honor thy father and mother. No normal person can be ignorant of these principles.

The Natural Law

Every law that *CONTRADICTS the natural law is unjust and not binding in conscience.* Since the natural law flows from the Eternal Law (from the Divine Reason and Will) it is binding in all men independently of time or place or circumstances; it cannot be abrogated. There is no **DOUBLE STANDARD** of morality – one for the strong and another for the weak.

What is Conscience?

Law is the expression of God's will and it is the external norm or rule of all our actions. It is by knowing and applying law to our individual actions that we attain our final end. Conscience therefore is the connecting link between law and particular acts.

What is Conscience?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1778 defines conscience as follows: “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law...”

Formed Conscience – Role of Parents, Educators and the Clergy

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church we must seek to educate all especially the young in the development of a formed or an informed conscience that knows the truth of our faith. “Conscience must be formed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator.

Formed Conscience – Role of Parents, Educators and the Clergy

The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings.”

The parents, Christian educators, the clergy and all the baptized in general play a vital role in the development of a well-formed and true conscience.



What is the Moral Good? Elements of a Moral Act

A human act is morally good if its object, its circumstances and its end are good. If any of these is bad, the act is morally evil. For example, almsgiving is something good in itself, but may be bad in certain circumstances and is always bad if prompted by a bad motive.



What is the Moral Good? Elements of a Moral Act

The moral goodness of an act depends, in the first place on the OBJECT – that is the thing to which the act is directed. Caring for an old person is morally good because it is good in itself while murder is morally evil because it is evil in itself contrary to the divine order and the natural law.

The Circumstances

Circumstances are certain accidental conditions which modify the act in some accidental condition which modify the act in some external way. Human acts are affected for better or for worse by circumstances of person, time, place, quantity and so forth. A mentally challenged person committing suicide may be viewed differently from a moral perspective than a person who deliberately and knowingly murdered an enemy.

The End or Intention of the Act

Every reasonable being has an end in view when he acts. He acts from a motive or purpose. Without it he will never be moved to act. It is clear that the end or motive which induces us to act hold the most prominent place among the sources of the morality of our acts. The best motive is the honor and glory of God. Such a motive makes even morally indifferent acts pleasing to God. “Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10.31).

A Good Motive or Intention Cannot Make a Bad Action Good

Evil must never be done that the good may come to it. This is the teaching of the Holy Scripture and of the Catholic Church. “Let us not do evil,” says Saint Paul, ‘that there may be good.’ (Roman 3.8). Today’s so-called ‘forward thinkers’ undermine many Church teachings in their belief that good intention justifies a bad human act.



A Good Motive or Intention Cannot Make a Bad Action Good

According to them, to marry a person of the same sex out of love (good intention but achieved through an evil action) is moral, acceptable and permissible. The Catholic Church holds quite a different position on same-sex marriage.

The Principle of Double Effect of an Act

A question often arises in the study of Catholic Morality. Is it lawful to perform an action which produces two effects – one good and the other bad? Such an act is permissible under the following conditions:

The Principle of Double Effect of an Act

- **The action, viewed in itself MUST BE GOOD;**
- **The evil effect must not be intended, but only permitted;**
- **There must be sufficiently weighty reason for permitting the evil effect;**
- **The good effect must follow at least as immediately as the evil one and**
- **The good effect must outweigh the evil.**

What is Moral Evil? (Doctrine on Sin)

Sin is the turning away from God, our true end, and the fixing of affections on something forbidden by the law of God. “Sin is offense against reason, truth and right conscience; it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor cause by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as “an utterance, s deed or a desire contrary to the eternal law.” (CCC 1849)

What is Moral Evil? (Doctrine on Sin)

In the light of reason, sin is hateful. In the light of faith, sin is the greatest of all evils. It is a contemptuous defiance of the almighty creator. It is an insult to Holy Trinity. It is a base act of ingratitude. It is an assault on our own soul, on our temporal and on our temporal and eternal happiness.

Types of Sins

Original Sin - Adam and Eve's disobedience of God's command, the first sin and because of it, mankind inherited this sin into our souls (original sin). It also resulted to the loss of supernatural life and the preternatural gifts from God. Sin entered the world. The sin separated mankind from God, darkened the human intellect, weakened the human will and introduced into human nature the inclination (and attractiveness) toward sin, concupiscence.

Mortal Sin

It is a grave violation of God's law which destroys a person's relationship with God by severing the person from the Divine Love.

Three conditions must be met for a sin to be mortal:

- 1) The sinful act must be a grave or serious matter (Ten Commandments);**
- 2) The person committing the sin must have full knowledge and**
- 3) The act must be freely chosen.**

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Venial Sin

It is an act against God but does not result into a complete separation from Him, however, it is still a willful deviation from the right path and a weakening of the life of grace.

Consequence of Sin – Mortal Sin and Eternal Fires of Hell

Because of sin, God punished man with the loss of the Beatific Vision and the preternatural gifts given to Adam and Eve. We must endure suffering, physical work, pain in childbirth and death. CCC 1035 also states the reality of hell as a consequence of unrepented mortal sin. “The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in the state of mortal sin descend into hell, ‘eternal fire.’”

Cooperation with Evil – Formal and Material Cooperation

Though a person may not perform the act itself, it is possible that one can commit serious or grave sin through cooperation with evil. Moral cooperation is when a person freely and knowingly assists another person in performing an immoral act, i.e., an action that is objectively evil. Such cooperation means that a person concurs in another's sinful act, and participates in a way that helps bring the sinful act to completion.

Cooperation with Evil – Formal and Material Cooperation

The Catechism teaches, “Anyone who uses the power at his disposal in such a way that it leads others to do wrong becomes guilty of scandal and responsible for the evil that he has directly or indirectly encouraged. (CCC #2287).

There are two kinds of cooperation :

- **Formal** (giving consent to the evil action – knowing that such would lead to an intrinsically evil act)
- **Material** (an action that is not evil but in so doing helps the actor perform another evil action).

Catholic Morality and its Application to Legion of Mary System

Though “Catholic Morality” are not found in the Handbook, the aforementioned principles and doctrines could be gleaned from certain parts of the HB. Ultimately, the goal of the Legion of Mary is doing good (sanctification) and avoiding (evil). It is the battle between Christ and Satan, virtue against sin. In this regard, you will find in the HB the following statement:

Catholic Morality and its Application to Legion of Mary System

"The Legion of Mary and its opposing forces, secularism and irreligion, confront each other. These forces, sustained by constant propaganda through the press, television, and video, have brought abortion, divorce, contraception, drugs and every form of indecency and brutality into the heart of every home. The simplicity and innocence of every new born babe is therefore left open to these devastating influences." (HB p. 79)

Catholic Morality and the Legion System (On Pursuit of the Sinner)

The Legion of Mary apostolic system states that our goal is to pursue at whatever cost the conversion of a sinner to a life of grace. We must as the Handbook points out, demonstrate infinite patience and sweetness to a soul. But why? And the answer may surprise many of us. Frank Duff points out that if sinner were only to drive Christ away, maybe we can let go of that soul and leave it alone. However, we cannot but not persevere.

Catholic Morality and the Legion System (On Pursuit of the Sinner)

The HB states this in the following manner: Here is the motive for legionary perseverance, exquisitely put by Monsignor R. H. Benson: "If a sinner merely drove Christ away by his sin, we could let such a soul go. It is because - in St. Paul's terrifying phrase - the sinful soul holds Christ, still crucifying him and making him a mockery (Heb 6:6), that we cannot bear to leave it to itself."

Catholic Morality and Application to the Membership Requirements

Chapter 13 of the Legion of Mary Handbook outlines the membership requirements of the Legion of Mary. First, we must point out this common but wrong notion on membership to the Legion. Not everyone ‘invited’ or ‘recruited’ to the Legion of Mary automatically qualifies to join its active ranks. One must apply for membership.

Catholic Morality and Application to the Membership Requirements

The HB states this as follows: “Persons who wish to join the Legion must apply for membership in a praesidium.” No one shall be admitted as a candidate for membership of the Legion of Mary until the President of the praesidium, to which admission is sought, is after careful enquiry satisfied that the person seeking admission fulfils the conditions required.”

Catholic Morality and Application to the Membership Requirements

The first and foremost requirement of a candidate for membership to the Legion of Mary is that he or she must be a Catholic who “faithfully practice their religion.” The faithful practice of our Catholic religion consists of living out fully a good and holy life and assenting to and obedience of ALL the true and orthodox doctrines and dogmas as decreed by the Magisterium as revealed and taught by Our Lord Jesus Christ through his apostles.

Catholic Morality and Application to the Membership Requirements

To be a Legionary of Mary is to be faithful to what her Son expects from us – love of God and neighbor. And in the Lord’s own words he says, “if you love me, follow my commandments.”

The VIRTUE OF OBEDIENCE IS A FUNDAMENTAL LEGIONARY CHARACTER.

Catholic Morality and Application to the Membership Requirements

The way to heaven is a narrow road but nevertheless along this journey is Our Lady at the helm and the Church teachings as the principal instruments to help steer and guide us to act according to God's will.

Catholic Morality and Application to the Membership Requirements

Therefore, the Legionary must believe and adhere to our Catholic faith. And this faith consists of doctrines which contain moral teachings that must be taught in order to effect true Christian apostleship. In 2020, San Francisco Senatus, inspired and guided by **Archbishop Cordileone's Letter to San Francisco High School Teachers, expounded on this aspect Legion membership with a document entitled 'Membership Requirements.'**

Catholic Morality and Application to the Membership Requirements

In summary, this document (you can read this from the San Francisco Senatus website: sfsenatus.com) establishes that those seeking membership to the Legion of Mary (and those who are already members) **must affirm and accept all Catholic doctrines in general and in particular, all its moral teachings to satisfy the Handbook membership requirement “must faithfully practice their religion.”**

**Summary of some of the Catholic Doctrines As Outlined in
the San Francisco Senatus Document: *“Membership
Requirements”***

**THE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IS THE ONE HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH.**

**THE AUTHORITY OF THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH
AND THE POPE.**

THE DOCTRINE ON THE REAL PRESENCE

**THE DOCTRINE ON WORTHY RECEPTION OF HOLY
COMMUNION**

THE DOCTRINE ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

**Summary of some of the Catholic Doctrines As Outlined in
the San Francisco Senatus Document: “Membership
Requirements”**

**THE DOCTRINE ON SUNDAY OBLIGATIONS AND HOLY DAY
OF OBLIGATIONS.**

THE DOCTRINE ON THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY.

THE DOCTRINE ON THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

THE MORAL TEACHING ON REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY

**THE TEACHING OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS ON FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP OR THE
'FIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES'**

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“FIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES”

- **Abortion**
- **Euthanasia**
- **Embryonic Stem Cell Research**
- **Human cloning**
- **Homosexual Marriage**