

2. Tradition: The Good in the Catholic Tradition

We were created in the image of God. Our human makeup has physical, mental, spiritual, and social dimensions. Because of humanity's primeval sin, our human makeup has become disfigured and out of sync with itself. Christ redeems us to sanctify us through the grace of His Spirit. With Christ and in His Spirit, we are able to live virtuous lives that give glory to the Father. The theological cardinal virtues renew the soul and transform it.

I. Introduction: Our Understanding of the Good does not Stand Alone. It Depends Upon Two Issues: Our Understanding of Ourselves; Our Understanding of God; We Are Created in the Image of God (Genesis 1:27)

Our Human Makeup: Four Anthropological Dimensions (1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 12:12); Physical (soma); Mental (psyche); Spiritual (pneuma); Social (soma ton Christou)

II. Being and Action: The Dignity of the Human Person

- The Analogy of Being (Likeness and Difference: Proper Proportionality)
- The Analogy of Action (Physical, Mental, Spiritual, Social Dimensions of Every Action)
- The Is/Ought Fallacy? What Ought to Be Is Based on What Is (A Critique)
- The Circular Relationship between Being and Action; Action flows from Being; Actions Shape the Soul

The Human Soul: Reason: Rational Power of Apprehension - Speculative Intellect: The Capacity to contemplate the Good - Practical Intellect: The Capacity to Practice the Good in Everyday Life.

Will: Rational Appetite: The Capacity to Focus on the Good

Passions: Educable, Oriented toward Reason - Irascible Appetite (The Spirited Passion) - Concupiscible Appetite (The Desiring Passion)

III. What is Virtue? Definition: A Habitual Disposition of the Soul toward Good
Characteristics of Virtue: Spontaneous Action toward Good; Like Second Nature
Via Media: Mean Between Extremes; Opposite of Vice

Kinds of Virtue: Acquired (Summa theologiae, I-II, q. 61, a. 2):

- Prudence (Reason): The Directing Principle of the Other Virtues
- Justice (Will): Giving Another His Due
- Fortitude (Irascible Appetite): Overcoming Obstacles to the Good

- Temperance (Concupiscible Appetite): Preventing Undue Attachments toward Apparent Goods.

Infused: Theological: Faith (Reason): The Intellect Opened to Divine Light

Hope (Will): The Will Is Directed by Grace toward that Light. Charity (Will): The Will Transformed by that Light

Cardinal:

- Prudence: Orients the Moral Virtues towards God
- Justice: Gives God and Neighbor their Due
- Fortitude: Overcomes Obstacles in the Way of Achieving One's Supernatural End
- Temperance: Orients the Passions toward One's Supernatural End

Conclusion: What Virtue Does; External: Shapes the World Toward the Good

Internal: Shapes the Soul (Character) - Perfects Human Nature - Elevates Human Nature

Reflection Questions

1. What are the four dimensions of our human makeup? What do they have to do with the Good life?
2. What is the relationship between Action and Being? How does this relationship shape our understanding of living the Good life?
3. What is Virtue? What is its purpose? What are its effects?