

JESUS

Model of Morality

Jesus is the Foundation

- Jesus is the foundation of Christianity
- This means that moral teaching must come after knowing Jesus mission
- Jesus was
 - Son of God
 - Forgiver of Sins
 - An advocate of the Poor
 - A voice of warning against sin
 - Witness of God's love

Homework

- Before we begin #1
 - Imagine that Jesus is talking to you about your moral life. What do you think he would say to you? Write a letter from Jesus to you about morality. Make it personally applicable to you.

COME, LORD JESUS

Section 1

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- If the Christ were to appear on Earth, in our country, where would it be? Where would we look for him?
 - The wise men looked in a palace for the Messiah. They did not find him there, but instead in a stable.
 - The story we know shows a lowly birth
 - This is very important

The lowly Birth

- The lowly birth in the Gospels shows something
 - The child so easily overlooked was in fact the long awaited Messiah
 - He was the light of the world
 - The Son of God
 - The Savior of the World

The ANSWER

- The Gospels might answer the question of where to find him.
 - The slums of an inner-city
 - Along a desolate country road
 - A large family with an assortment of odd jobs
 - Living with a nurse and a teacher newly graduated and married
 - A picker in a field on a farm

The Person of Jesus

“The whole of Christ’s life was a continual teaching: His silences, His gestures, His prayers, His love for people, His special affection for the little and the poor, His acceptance of the total sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world, and His Resurrection are actualization of His word and the fulfillment of Revelation”

(CCC #561)

- The life of Jesus is anything but dull
 - The Incarnation-at a time appropriate for his task the only Son of God came to earth to redeem man kind. Took human form while remaining divine
 - His ministry on Earth starts at the Baptism in the Jordan
 - His message is both endearing and challenging, confronting and compassionate.

- The moral life that Jesus taught
 - Not from some Philosopher that makes pronouncements
 - From a human being who is living it
- A human being with human hands, made human choices, and wept with human eyes
- Jesus was a man of the people, a preacher and a prophet

Jesus Moral Teaching

- Jesus does not offer a single systematic presentation of moral principles
- Instead his moral system is encountered in the story of his life (how he lived)
 - The gospels are our source
 - Many key moral teachings come from Sermon on the Mount

Homework

- Group Talk (pg 23)

The sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) contains many pronouncements about morality beginning with the Beatitudes. However, a parable such as the Good Samaritan story in Luke 10, also contains moral implications. Look at the several Gospel verses listed in the book. After reading through them state the moral messages that they contain

The Person of Jesus

- We are left wanting to know more about Jesus life before 30
 - all we do know about life before Baptism is birth and getting lost at the temple
- Jesus first miracle was the conversion of water into wine at the wedding at Cana
 - His first miracle was to give people drink and pleasure
 - To prevent the bride and groom from being embarrassed
 - To help everyone feel welcome

The Person of Jesus

- A second miracle takes place later in Mark
 - Raising of the Pharisee's daughter
 - They come to him and ask that he heal the daughter but when they get to her she is dead
 - He tells them she is just sleeping but they chastise him
 - He then tells them all to leave the room and then tells her to stand.
- These incidents start to show the moral Character of Jesus

The Moral Character of Jesus

- Although we don't have very much in the way of Biblical accounts like these we still are able to start piecing together the moral character of Jesus
 - Demonstrates
 - Courage
 - Compassion
 - Desire to help people
 - Shares meals with
 - Outcasts
 - Leaders
 - Gets upset when someone gets left out

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- We see the moral character of Jesus in the way he acts with those around him

Jesus, the Son of God

- An incomplete list of the many facets of Jesus
 - The only son of God the Father
 - To get a clearer picture of The Father we look at Jesus who is our image of The Father
 - Everything that Jesus says and does makes a statement about God
 - Jesus is God
 - He was divine and assumed our Human nature while keeping his divine nature
 - *“Jesus Christ is true God and true man, in the unity of his divine person; for this reason he is the one and only mediator between God and men” (CCC #480)*

Jesus, the Son of God

- Jesus is the Savior of humanity
 - The name “Jesus” means “God saves”.
 - The “Christ” in his name is a title meaning “anointed”
 - He is the one sent by God to save us from our sins
 - *“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)*
- Jesus is *“the way the truth and the life” (John 14:6)*
 - *pg 25*

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- Activity pg 25
 - Instead of reading the Gospels use what you know and the Book

LOVE OF GOD, LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

Section 2

- Jesus is the model of Love
 - Even non-Christians associate Him with love
 - He embodies love through his
 - Presence
 - Healing touch
 - Words of comfort to the sorrowing
 - Words of challenge to the

- During his public life Jesus went through great pains to make his message known
 - God LOVES us
- 1 John 4:10-11

“In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.”

- Love is the Guiding principle of Morality
 - We see this when the Pharisee's test Jesus (pg 26)
- Guiding principles of Morality
 - All love comes from God
 - Love on our part is a response to and a participation in God's love
 - Love others as we love ourselves, that is, with our whole being
 - Love of others and love of God are inseparable.

Finding Christ

- Imagine
 - You are brought into the Police station and asked to identify Christ
 - Four people are put before in the lineup
 - A hardened prisoner
 - A strange looking older woman
 - A young boy in tattered clothes
 - A mother carrying a undernourished crying baby
- Identify Christ

- We are called to seek Christ in every person
 - Those who are in the mainstream and those who are far from mainstream
 - We find Christ in prisons, hospitals, homeless shelters
 - Just like Jesus we must treat others like our brothers and sisters not matter what their circumstances in life

The Christian Measure of True Happiness

“The beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus preaching...They shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life...The Beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness. This desire is of divine origin: God has placed it in the human heart in order to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it.”

CCC #1716-1718

The Beatitudes

- Sometimes thought of as the Christian equivalent to the Ten Commandments
 - They are both lists describing how to live as God's people
 - The Commandments are a list of specific laws
 - The Beatitudes are a list of goals in our life as Christians
 - Building up God's kingdom
 - Participating in the life of the Trinity
 - Attaining happiness on Earth and in heaven
 - Living as sons and daughters of God

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- The Beatitudes are not a simple list of rules
 - Nor are they a list of things to do
 - Instead they are a way of life that results from trying to live the values of Jesus
 - Beatitude saints – people who take the Beatitudes message to heart and attempt to live it

Beatitude Saints

- On the surface, Beatitude Saints appear to endure a difficult life
- Under the surface, they live a life joy and contentment
 - They experience the Joy that comes from an attitude of trust and from acting on that trust.

The Beatitudes

- *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*
- *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
- *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

The Beatitudes

- *Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*
- *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
- *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
- *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*

Blessed are the poor in spirit

- Poor in Spirit comes from the Aramaic word *ányá*
- *ányá* – bent down, afflicted, miserable, humble
 - Conditions of the poor: low estate, their social dependence, defenseless exposure to injustice from the rich and the mighty.
 - by free will the poor in spirit are ready to bear for God's sake this painful and humble condition, even though at present they be actually rich and happy
 - The poor man may actually fall short of this poverty

Blessed are those who mourn

- Miseries from which the pious man is suffering in himself and in others, and worst of all the tremendous might of evil.
- **THE REWARD:** the comfort of the heavenly kingdom: the consolation of Israel, the promised land

Blessed are the meek

- *ánawim* – bending oneself down, humble, gentle
- They who humbly and meekly bend themselves before God and man

- The book describes it as Gentle.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness

- Hunger and thirst for justice
 - A strong and continuous desire to progress in religious and moral perfection
 - Reward: continuous growth in holiness

Blessed are the merciful

- By doing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy we will receive the divine mercy of the messianic Kingdom in this life and @ the final judgment.

Works of Mercy

Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the Hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Convert the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

Blessed are the pure in heart

- “Cleanness of heart”
 - The simple and sincere good intention
 - The continuous looking for god’s glory
- THE REWARD: the supernatural seeing of God himself

Blessed are the peacemakers

- The peacemakers are those who not only live in peace with others but moreover do their best to preserve peace and friendship among mankind and between God and man and restore it when it has been disturbed.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake

- When after all this the pious disciples of Christ are repaid with ingratitude and even persecution, it will be but a new blessing, “for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven”

Examination of Conscience

- The beatitudes are
 - life goals
 - A list of actions that flow from those goals
- We can use this as an Examination of Conscience

Poor in Spirit

- Do I trust in God?
- Does my life become so cluttered that I have little time for God?
- Do I recognize that the world is not a weight upon my shoulders alone?
- Can I accept help rather than always trying to go it alone?
- Do I identify with poor people and together with them, seek reasons for hope?
- Do I work to change attitudes and structures that oppress poor people?

Those who mourn

- Life always involves suffering.
 - Do I appreciate that the suffering that comes from giving myself for others can also bring joy?
 - Can I feel the pain of others, and do I contribute to relieving their anguish?

The Gentle

- Do I view other people with profound respect?
- Do I treat the people whom I meet with care, sensitivity, and even tenderness?

Those who hunger and thirst for Righteousness (Justice)

- Do I relate to others with a sense of fair play?
- Do I push myself to speak out against injustice and to work for just causes?

The Merciful

- Do I wish for others what I would want for myself?
- When others are down, do I try to help them up rather than take advantage of their misfortune?
- Would people who know me say that I am truly a kind person?

The Pure in Heart

- Am I a person of integrity, someone who cultivates wholesome values and stands up for those values?
- Am I sincerely honest when making decisions about right and wrong?
- Are my motives pure, that is, not dominated by self-interest to the exclusion of the interest of others?

Peacemakers

- Do I search for peaceful means to resolve conflicts?
- Am I known as a peacemaker in my family, among my friends, and with the strangers whom I meet?
- Do I try to understand the points of view of those with whom I have disagreements?

Those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness

- Are there beliefs and principles that I hold dear?
- Am I willing to stand up for my beliefs, even when they are unpopular or lead to personal hardships?

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Section 3

The Kingdom of God

- The kingdom of God is the central theme of Jesus preaching
 - Jesus taught about the kingdom in many of his parables
 - A heavenly banquet to which everyone is invited, especially sinners and outcasts
 - A precious pearl found discarded in a field
 - A yeast that appears insignificant but, when added to bread, makes an entire loaf rise.
 - He also taught about a world where God reigns

- Jesus also points out that the Kingdom of God is already here
 - God is already among us and within us
- Through His death on the cross and His Resurrection, Jesus accomplished the coming of the Kingdom

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- Gods reign has both worldly and otherworldly dimensions to it
 - The kingdom of God is happening now in our relationship with God
 - “reaches fulfillment” in heaven

Building up the Kingdom of God

- Jesus wants us to share in his work of building up God's kingdom here on earth
 - Receive the Sacraments
 - Reconciliation
 - Eucharist
 - Serve one another
 - Share our goods with others
 - Refuse to retaliate with violence

- Participating in the Church is also a way to build up the Kingdom of God
 - Church is the “seed and beginning of this kingdom” (CCC 567)
 - By sending the 12 Apostles to preach the kingdom
 - By giving peter the Keys to the Kingdom
- Jesus establishes the Church as means to continue the work of building the Church

Come and Follow Me

- According to John's Gospel, Jesus shared the Last Supper with his closest friends
 - At the Eucharist, he took a towel and tied it around his waist, got on his knees and washed his disciples feet
- At the time of Jesus it was common for the slaves to wash the hands and face of the dinner guests
 - Servants however did not wash the feet of the guests (that was their own responsibility)
 - No sewage or garbage disposal, dusty streets

- Jesus washing the feet of his disciples was both shocking and purposeful
 - Sends a clear message about the type of behavior that Jesus expected of the disciples
 - As he finished he said “For I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” John 13:15
- On another occasion
 - Jesus gathers his disciples
 - Tells them “Whoever wants to be first, must be last of all and servant of all.”

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- The message of the Gospels is very clear
 - Christians are commissioned by Jesus to serve one another and those who are hurting in their midst.

Vocabulary

- Kingdom of God- God's reign or rule- proclaimed by and present in Jesus- in which people serve one another, share their goods with one another, and refuse to retaliate with violence against others
- Foot Washing- the activity Jesus performed prior to the Last Supper that becomes the model for all Christian service
- "Hard Sayings" of Jesus- teachings such as the beatitudes and the Last Judgment that overturn commonly held values and priorities

Hard Sayings

- The Gospels contain many “hard sayings” of Jesus
- Even his closest friends and his disciples found his teachings to be hard understand and even harder to follow
 - Even to the point the some left
- Many places in the scriptures we see examples of difficult teachings, some even disturbing.
- Two Gospel passages that exemplify values and priorities that run contrary to those found in most cultures

Mark 10:42-44

“You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.”

Luke 6:27-31

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

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- We have become accustomed to the words that we call the hard-sayings of Jesus
 - Imagine that we were unaccustomed to hearing this
 - A new church
 - A new message

- Or imagine that we are using different words and not through the Church to preach these sentiments
 - Ridicule
 - Labeling (labeling troublemakers)
 - Denunciation (as crazy religious zealots)
- The hard sayings of Jesus create tension in anyone who attempts take them seriously.
 - We are however as members of the Church called to take seriously what Jesus took seriously.

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- Behind the hard-sayings of Jesus we see a message of hope.
 - What is that message?

JESUS AND THE LAW

Section 4

Catechism# 1962

“The Old Law is the first stage of revealed law. Its moral prescriptions are summed up in the Ten Commandments. The precepts of the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments] lay the foundations for the vocation of man fashioned in the image of God; they prohibit what is contrary to the love God and neighbor and prescribe what is essential to it.”

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- This section is on Law
 - What are the types of Law?

- Moral Law
 - Moral Law- the fatherly instruction of God, setting forth the ways which lead to happiness and proscribing those which lead to evil. (*CCC-1950*)
- God has also given us other expressions of the law
 - Natural
 - Divine (revealed)
 - Church
 - Civil

Natural Law

- The fatherly love of God that is written on the human heart and accessed by human reason
 - God has written on the soul of all Human Being a basic moral sense
 - This moral sense enables humans to discern right from wrong
 - Natural law is our compass, our guide given by God, to help us make good moral decisions

More Types of Law

- Divine Law
 - The law that has been revealed to humanity.
 - Marriage between man and woman
 - Only men admitted to the priesthood
 - The Trinity
- Church Law
 - Law that governs aspects of the Church
 - How a Church is built
 - The rules for the practice of the liturgy
- Civil Law
 - The rules of the State

Law

- In the Gospels we often see Jesus as being in conflict the Law
 - Violation of the Sabbath
 - Healing on the Sabbath
 - Allowing his disciples to pick grain
 - Challenged to name the greatest commandment
 - Pronounce judgment on difficult legal matters

The Law of the Gospels

- “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” *Matthew 5:17*
- The Old Law is good and holy and shows us what is sinful
- It is however not perfect, no strength of the Holy Spirit to fulfill it.
- How is the law fulfilled?

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- Jesus fulfills
 - Gives us the Law of the Gospels
 - Does not abolish the old Law
 - Instead he built upon the old law

The Law of the Gospel

- Jesus gives us the Law of the Gospel
- Rather than abolishing the Old law, he builds upon it
 - Calling for change in our hearts
 - Calling for a giving of ourselves into God's care

Law of the Gospel

- Jesus teachings describe what happens when we change our hearts
 - Example The Beatitudes
 - Jesus reaches out to those who are open to the new law of love
 - The poor in Spirit
 - The gentle
 - The persecuted
 - Those mourning
 - Those seeking justice
 - The merciful
 - The pure in heart
 - The peacemakers

Law of the Gospel

- Elsewhere we are reminded to
 - Change and become like Children (*Mt 18:3*)
 - sell your possessions and, give the money to the poor (*Mt 19:21*)
- Examples of people changed by love

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.”

(Mt 5:17-18)

- As the passage makes clear, Jesus brings the law into fulfillment

The Law and Jesus

- Jewish law gives us the terms of friendship between God and us.
 - Jesus is the embodiment and completion of that friendship
- Jesus, being Jewish knew the Law
 - However he disapproved of some of the attitudes and interpretations of the words of the Law
 - Jesus criticized those who used reasoning to get around the Law (going around the letter of the Law)

Letter and Spirit

- Letter of the Law- doing what the Law requires only because it says so
- Spirit of the Law- acting in response to the Holy Spirit who dwells within us; doing what the law requires because you want to