



NEWMAN INSTITUTE

KNOWING, LOVING AND SHARING THE FAITH

V. Life in Christ: Christian Morality

(3 sessions)

*“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.
No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command you.” (Jn 15:12-14)*

*“Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?’ (Mt 19:16)...
The question which the rich young man puts to Jesus of Nazareth
is one which rises from the depths of his heart.*

*It is an essential and unavoidable question for the life of every man,
for it is about the moral good which must be done, and about eternal life. The young man
senses that there is a connection between moral good
and the fulfilment of his own destiny.”
(Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, n. 8)*

Course Description: To be a Christian is a matter not only of believing in Jesus but, as St. Paul describes it, of *living in Christ* so that “I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). What the Creed professes and the Sacraments communicate, the Christian moral life enacts—thanks to the grace of Christ and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This course explores Christian moral principles by beginning with the dignity and vocation of the human person created in the image and likeness of God; it addresses key concepts such as freedom, responsibility, moral conscience, virtue and vice, law and grace, and the Beatitudes; it concludes with an overview of the Ten Commandments as the basis of our moral life in Christ.

Reading and Reference Materials: *U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults* (US/CCA, ch. 23-34); the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC, part 3); *The Compendium of the CCC* (Comp., part 3)

Course Sequence:

Session One: The Vocation of the Human Person*

How do I answer the call to holiness in my daily life?

1. The Dignity of the Human Person
2. The Human Community

Session Two: The Commandments—Love of God*

How do the Commandments help us and challenge us on the journey to our Beatitude?

1. God's Salvation—Law and Grace
2. The First Commandment
3. The Second Commandment
4. The Third Commandment

Session Three: The Commandments—Love of Neighbor*

How do I order my life according to the Great Commandment?

1. The Fourth Commandment
2. The Fifth Commandment
3. The Sixth Commandment
4. The Seventh Commandment
5. The Eighth Commandment
6. The Ninth Commandment
7. The Tenth Commandment

*Each Session is 2 hours long, plus recommended follow-up activity.

Session One: The Vocation of the Human Person—Life in the Spirit (2 Hours)
(CCC, 1691-1948; Comp., n. 357-414)

How do I answer the call to holiness in my daily life?

1. The Dignity of the Human Person
2. The Human Community

Learning Objectives:

- *Identify the foundations of morality, and the call to ongoing conversion at the heart of the moral life
- *Discuss the effects of moral conversion
- *Identify the Beatitudes as the sure guide for moral living and path to true happiness
- *Define virtue and compare human and theological virtues
- *Define conscience
- *Analyze key elements in the proper formation of one's conscience
- *Explain the effects of the Fall on the human condition, and relate these to Salvation in Christ
- *Identify the three elements required of a morally good act
- *Compare mortal sin and venial sin
- *Define law, moral law, and natural law
- *Contrast the Old Law and New Law

- *Describe the "common good"
- *Discuss the concept of "solidarity"
- *Explain the effects of the Fall on the human condition, and relate these to
- *Connect personal and social morality
- *Introduce the idea of grace and free will
- *Show that all morality proceeds from love – God's love for us and our loving response to God

Recommended Follow-Up: Read US/CCA, Ch. 23; post responses to discussion questions on pg. 319.

Session 2: The Commandments—Love of God (2 hours)
(CCC, 1948-2195; Comp., n. 415-454)

How do the Commandments help us and challenge us on the journey to our Beatitude?

1. God's Salvation—Law and Grace
3. The First Commandment
4. The Second Commandment
4. The Third Commandment

Learning Objectives:

- *Discuss the meaning of true freedom
- *Discuss the foundation and context of Natural Law
- *Define the Magisterium and infallibility
- *Discuss grace, justification, and holiness
- *Identify the greatest commandment
- *Explain how the Precepts of the Church give guidance to the Christian moral life
- *Analyze the relation between freedom and responsibility
- *Relate the “two great commandments” to the Ten Commandments
- *Describe the role of the Decalogue in God's covenantal relationship with his chosen people

Recommended Follow-Up: Read US/CCA, Ch. 24; post responses to discussion questions on pg. 335; reflect on the following passage from Bl. J. H. Newman: "Man has within his breast a certain commanding dictate, not a mere sentiment, not a mere opinion or impression or view of things, but a law, an authoritative voice, bidding him do certain things and avoid others. I do not say that its particular injunctions are always clear, or that they are always consistent with each other; but what I am insisting on here is this, that it *commands*; that it praises, blames, it threatens, it implies a future, and it witnesses of the unseen. It is more than a man's own self. The man himself has no power over it, or only with extreme difficulty; he did not make it, he cannot destroy it.... This is Conscience, and, from the nature of the case, its very existence carries our minds to a Being exterior to ourselves; for else, when did it come?..."

Session 3: The Commandments—Love of Neighbor

(2 hours)

(CCC, n. 2196-2547; Comp., n. 455-533)

How do I order my life according to the Great Commandment?

1. The Fourth Commandment
2. The Fifth Commandment
3. The Sixth Commandment
4. The Seventh Commandment
5. The Eighth Commandment
6. The Ninth Commandment
7. The Tenth Commandment

Learning Objectives:

- *Review the difference between true freedom and contemporary versions of false freedom
- *Identify a Catholic way of life based on scriptural values as opposed to secular values
- *Review how to acquire and follow a well-formed conscience
- *Discuss the role of the family in God's plan and in society
- *Articulate the importance of respect for life and human sexuality
- *Discuss the complementarity of men and women
- *Define chastity and relate it the Sacrament of Marriage
- *Discuss social justice in the context of the call to love of neighbor
- *Identify the Social Doctrine of the Church and its implications for contemporary American culture
- *Discuss the importance of "living in the truth"
- *Assess the importance of purity in the Christian life
- *Introduce counter-cultural teachings such as the "Gospel of Life" and the "Theology of the Body"

Recommended Follow-Up: Read US/CCA, Ch. 28 ("Strengthen Your Family"); post responses to discussion questions on pg. 382; select one of the course's "essential questions" and provide a preliminary response using some of the key concepts from the course, or decide what other "essential question" the Lord is leading you to consider; select one potentially controversial topic and use the principles discussed in the course to explain why the Church teaches what she does on the matter; complete online course evaluation.

Resources:

Living the Beatitudes

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2716

Teaching Children to Treasure the 10 Commandments

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2056

Teaching Strategies that Facilitate Moral Development

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=1766

Habits for Moral Maturity

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=1190

Mom and Pop as Moral Mentors

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=1189

Blessed are the Pure of Heart

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=2055

Teaching Social Justice

http://www.catechist.com/archive/articles_view.php?article_id=1805

Courage: Catholic Ministry for Homosexuals

<http://couragerc.net/>

Marriage: Unique for a Reason (USCCB)

<http://www.marriageuniqueforareason.org/>