

Introduction to Moral Theology

Online course at Newman Theological College [NTC], Edmonton

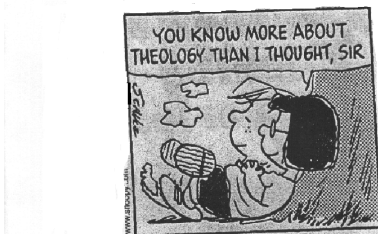
Week / Module 1

by Paul Flaman



Welcome to this online course, "Introduction to Moral Theology," which is taught for both undergraduate students MPS 120i and graduate students STP 461i at NTC. This first module (approximately a week) is meant first for us to begin to get to know each other, and to introduce this online course. It also includes material from my class notes and Power Point Slides for the first module / week of the course.

Class Notes and Slides (these incorporate points from my lectures and Power Point Slides (the latter is generally in bold) when I previously taught this course in person at NTC)



Introduction and Module / Week 1:

Introduction

-**Slide 1:** My Prayer for the Holy Spirit: Heavenly Father, in the name of your Son Jesus, we ask you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Please fill our hearts with the fire, compassion and warmth of your love, and our minds with the light, wisdom and clarity of your truth. (Compare Jn 16:13 re the Holy Spirit

leading Jesus' disciples into the fullness of truth, Rm 5:5 re God pouring the love of God into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given us, and Lk 11:13 re Jesus teaching that God our Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.) **This prayer is very relevant to Christian morality** since being morally good from a Christian perspective involves loving God, oneself, others and the rest of God's Creation well, according to the truth.

Saint Alphonsus, patron of moralists and confessors, pray for us; Blessed John Cardinal Henry Newman, pray for us. In the name of the Father, Amen

A Little About Me: I (Professor Paul Flaman) grew up on a farm about 50 km North of Regina, the oldest of 8 children (my parents raised us Catholic). I attended a public school in the town of Southey. Most of us were German background (my grandparents and parents' first language was German but I only learned some German as an adult) of either Catholic, Lutheran or Baptist Christian denominations. In my later teens I questioned many things about my Christian Catholic upbringing. I attended the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon for four years obtaining a B.A. with Honours in English. While at university, due to several factors including taking a few courses at the Catholic College (St. Thomas More), I again became a believing Christian and convinced Catholic. I took two years off university to work including one year in the L'Arche Community in Calgary, living and working with mentally disabled adults, and a year working with the leadership of the Love of God prayer community in Regina. I then went on to study Catholic theology in Rome as a lay person obtaining Bachelor, Licentiate and Doctorate degrees in Catholic Theology. My specialization was in the area of moral-spiritual theology and my doctoral dissertation focused on Family Unity. I got married to a very beautiful woman Maggie in 1983. We have three young adult children, and a grandson (born in October 2014). I continue to be a believing Christian and try to be a practicing Catholic.

I began teaching at St. Joseph's College, the University of Alberta in the Fall of 1983; my courses taught there do not include an introduction to moral theology, but I taught two weekends of that for the permanent diaconate program several times, and I taught this course in person at NTC in the Fall of 2018. Fr. Robert Gauthier taught this course at NTC before I did in 2018. He provided me with much of his teaching materials for which I am very grateful. The courses I regularly teach at St. Joseph's College include Spirituality for Today's Christians; Sex, Love and Marriage: Christian Perspectives; Bioethical Issues: Christian Perspectives, and Neuroscience, the Person and Christian Theology. I have also taught quite a few directed reading courses there at the undergraduate, masters and doctorate level. I have also taught at NTC more than once both the Married Love and Sexuality in the Christian Tradition course and the Bioethics: Moral Issues from the Life Sciences course. My research and publishing areas include the areas of my teaching.

Not related to university I enjoy going for walks, playing golf, word games and cards with my wife. I also enjoy playing chess (if any of you want to play let me know!). While I cheer for the Edmonton Oilers, I am still at heart a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan first and an Edmonton Elks fan second.

A Little About You: On this section of the E-Class please introduce yourself to me and the other students in the class. Among other things please let us briefly know your university goals and what you hope to learn in this course (or why you are taking it). Also, let us know a bit about yourself including any interests not related to university. Are you a seminarian (RC? Eastern rite), a candidate for the permanent diaconate or other? Are you a member of a non-Catholic Christian denomination? Are you married, diocesan or religious? Are you taking this course at the Bachelor (MPS) or Master's (STP) level? If there is anything else you want to let me know about yourself and/or situation at this time in the course please let me know by email.

This course is a course of fundamental moral theology. It will not deal so much with specific moral issues or questions. Of course, we will often consider examples related to the material and some of these will be related to specific moral issues, e.g., related to bioethics, human sexuality and marriage, some issues related to the Church's social teachings and teachings related to care for our environment.

Note also that this course is an **"INTRODUCTION"** to Moral Theology, for each of the classes our goal is to introduce some main points through the required readings, and class lectures (notes and slides) and discussion (with the online Discussion Forums for each module) but we will not have time to consider the course topics in great detail.

Please look over the course outline / syllabus for this course (which is online under this Module) noting, among other things, the course requirements, and textbooks. If you have any questions, please post them on the online forum for this Module or email them to me.

Slides 2-3: Introduction to morality/ethics, theology, Christian, Catholic and moral theology

Before you look at the summary points on Slide 2 below, please take a minute to think about how you would define morality and ethics. Can you think of any examples related to the distinction of what we have voluntary control over versus what happens to us (either inside or outside one's person)?

Slide 2: Introduction to Moral Theology

- * **Ethics/Morality: Meaning of morality / ethics?**
- * **"Morality is from the Latin *mos* / Ethics from the Greek *ethos***
- * **Related to what we have voluntary control over, i.e., our freely chosen actions and omissions, vs. what happens to us beyond our control (cf. Thomas Aquinas and Karol Wojtyla). Related to responsibility, what we ought to do or ought not to do.**
- * **One of the first steps in deciding about what to do or not to do is to identify what the ethical issues or questions are, to identify what options or choices are available.**
- * **This is also a first step in ethical analysis of issues and concrete situations and cases.**
- * **Cf. the Serenity Prayer: God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, Courage to change the things which should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other. (Reinhold Niebuhr)**

With regard to what we do not have voluntary control over consider what happens to us beyond one's control, inside us such as getting cancer or outside us such as the weather, and what other people choose to think and do or not do. A few of my examples regarding this distinction include being born, getting sick and dying vs. choosing to go to a doctor, to eat well, get enough rest and exercise; a miscarriage (spontaneous abortion) vs. a miscarriage; experiencing sexual attraction towards another person vs. choosing to act on this or refrain from acting. This distinction we find in Thomas Aquinas, and it is central to Karol Wojtyla's (he became Saint Pope John II) *The Acting Person*. We are only responsible for what we have voluntary control over.

Regarding a first step in making a decision and ethical analysis, note other steps such as identifying the needs of others and oneself, relevant values/goods, norms/principles (i.e., of the Bible, Church teaching, civil society, and professional organizations...) including the principle of moral discernment (treated later under modules / weeks 5, 6 and 9 of this course).

Note the Serenity prayer is a favorite with groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous ... Regarding the prayer apply the distinction of what we have within our control and what we do not.

Before reading the contents of slide 3 and related class notes please take a couple of minutes to think about how you understand theology, Christian, Christian morality, Catholic, and moral theology.

Slide 3: Introduction to Moral Theology

- * **Theology (from the Greek *theos* & *logos*), etymologically means “science of God” and described by St. Augustine of Hippo as “faith seeking understanding.” Theology is an integrative discipline which considers everything and all other knowledge in relation to God.**
- * **Christian means a follower of Christ Jesus); the Bible is considered inspired by God in some sense by all mainline Christians and is a major source of theological reflection.**
- * **Christian morality: considers morality in the light of God's fullest revelation to us human beings in Jesus Christ. Jesus related all of morality to the two great commandments. There is nothing more positive that any of us can do than to love God, oneself and others properly, as Jesus loves. Compare an interview with Pope Benedict XVI.**
- * **Catholic: from the Greek *kata holos*, etymologically meaning “according to the whole,” holistic, universal.**
- * **A Catholic perspective affirms the unity of truth (compare experience, reason, revelation and faith); considers the Bible together with Tradition and the Magisterium—the pope and bishops as successors of the apostles Jesus chose and official Catholic teaching**

- * **Moral theology: a discipline / field of study that considers morality in the light of God**

Slide 4: Monsignor David Bohr



A few required and some recommended readings in this course are from his book, *Catholic Moral Tradition Revised* (see the bibliography as the last part of the course outline for the publication details).

- **Bohr was ordained for the Diocese of Scranton in 1971. He received his doctorate in Moral Theology "summa cum laude" from the Academia Alfonsiana, Rome, Italy, and has written, lectured and taught in the areas of moral theology and evangelization for many years.**
- **He currently serves as Academic Dean of the Pontifical North American College and teaches theology part-time at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, Italy.**
- **Previous responsibilities of his included being the rector of Pius X Seminary in Dalton, Pennsylvania, being the director of the diocesan office for the Diaconate and director of the diocesan Pastoral formation Institute, chairing the diocesan commission on Ethics for Catholic Health Care Institutions and teaching moral theology at the University of Scranton.**

The Alfonsiana is a Catholic University in Rome named after St. Alphonsus Ligouri and is run by the Redemptorists. In Rome a college such as the “North American College” is the place where seminarians and priests live; it is not the main place they take classes. There are 16 Pontifical Universities in Rome. Although I did my theology degrees at the Angelicum (Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas), I studied Latin at the Gregorian, and took courses at the Spiritual Institute near the Gregorian, at the Teresianum (run by the Carmelites), and at the John Paul II Institute of Marriage and the Family at the Lateran University, in Rome, Italy.

Slides 5-8: present some highlights of Bohr’s “Introduction: Toward a Theology of Christian Living,” in his book, *Catholic Moral Tradition Revised*.

Slide 5: David Bohr’s Introduction: Highlights

- **St. Paul in Phil 2:5-8 calls us to have the same attitude as Christ Jesus who emptied and humbled himself becoming obedient even to death on a cross.**
- **We are relational beings: true happiness and fulfillment can be found only in communion with the Triune God. By grace we are a new creation in Christ: moral commandments teach us how to use grace correctly.**
- **Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger [who later became Pope Benedict XVI and who is now Pope Emeritus] in presenting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* said it would be erroneous to separate the pages on morality from the rest—the profession of faith and the teaching on the sacraments and prayer.**
- **After the Council of Trent the moral manuals were introduced intending to help confessors—they were books of moral pathology. Moral theology did not concern itself with the more positive task of growing in virtue which was left to ascetical theology and devotional works. The Church's primary apostolate is to bring men and women into full communion with Christ. A common complaint is that the Church's moral teaching tends to be couched in negative language which overshadows the possible attractiveness of Christian ideals—if Christian morality is not attractively presented it will interest no one.**

Discussion Question 1: Do you think that priests and deacons today have the tools to deal with very specific moral issues in the confessional and in counselling?

Slide 6: Bohr's Introduction continued

- * **We live in a post-modern, pluralistic, and secular age: Robert Bellah et al. [three sociologists, a philosopher and a theologian] in *Habits of the Heart* unveil the fierce individualism that undermines our capacity for commitment to one another. Without objectifiable criteria of right and wrong the self and its feelings become our only moral guide.**
- * **Two philosophical systems have shaped the contemporary ethical atmosphere and moral education. Rationalism, the core of the Enlightenment, proposed to liberate the mind from religion and custom espousing reason, science, and political freedom. On the other hand, Romanticism elevated emotion and celebrated the natural instincts. Twentieth century neo-Romantics considered all truths including moral truths to be only the result of cultural relativism. These philosophical forces are at the root of individualism, subjectivism, secular humanism, positivism, utilitarianism, and pragmatism.**

Note: before the conclave that elected him as Pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger spoke strongly about the dictatorship or relativism that is prevalent today. Positivism is a philosophical approach focusing on facts and phenomena excluding causes and origins. Pragmatism is a philosophical approach that generally stresses practical consequences as constituting the essential criterion in determining meaning, truth, or value.

- * **In American schools the more traditional “character education model” was often replaced with the “values clarification” approach which emphasizes feelings and a non-judgmental attitude, leaving the student with the impression that all values are a matter of personal taste.**

Discussion Question 2: How does the schooling you received compare to these models / approaches?

- * **Biblical religion, however, also remains very much a part of our cultural history. Regarding what is right most people are more influenced by stories and imagination than arguments.**

Regarding the last point above consider, e.g., childhood fairy tales, ancient myths, and Jesus’ parables.

- * **Advertising creates in us a sense of never having enough.**

Slide 7: Bohr’s Introduction continued

- * **The Christian “story” includes man and woman created at the pinnacle of creation in God’s image, human sin resulted in all kinds of alienation in relationships, and God sent Jesus who brings reconciliation. The Good News includes redemption and God’s Spirit of truth and love who renews our inner selves and helps us discern what is the will of God.**

Consider Christian theology and Pope John Paul II’s theology of the body...

- * **While many people in desperation today turn to drugs, alcohol, sexual promiscuity and even suicide and war, there is a deep spiritual hunger today.**

As Augustine of Hippo observed, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you, O Lord.” A number of developments arising out of Vatican II have contributed to a new integration of the Christian spiritual and moral life.

- * **Vatican II in its Decree on the Training of Priests (OT), n. 16, called for the renewal of Catholic moral theology: it is to have a livelier contact with Christ and the history of salvation, draw more fully on the teaching of Scripture, highlight the vocation of the faithful in Christ and their obligation to bring forth fruit in charity for the life of the world.**

Note: The required Reading by William May for Module / Week 1 considers this call of Vatican II in more detail.

- * **The openness to the world characteristic of Vatican II, however, led many Catholic moralists to replace orthodoxy and love of the truth for a taste for novelty, variety, relativity and adaptation.**

E.g., following Pope Paul VI’s Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968) there was widespread dissent among many Catholic moral theologians—it should also be noted, however, that many other moral theologians remained faithful and defended HV, etc.

- * **Pope John Paul II addressed this situation in his 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. Vatican II, GS, proposes an integrated vision of Christian life that is Christocentric with moral life flowing from a genuine spiritual life.**

Christian life is essentially a faith-response to the gift-call of divine revelation where Christ fully reveals who we are and our exalted vocation.

- * **Moral theology deals not just with norms and good and sinful acts but with God.**

Slide 8: Bohr's Introduction continued

- * **While humanists and other non-Christians often share with us the same goals and virtues, dialogue can distract us from how Christian faith forms and guides the Christian moral life.**
- * **St. Paul places at the heart of morality a person, Jesus, who is the center for everyone. Jesus' paschal mystery reconciles us to God, to one another and to all creation. Christian life is first of all a matter of a personal following of Jesus Christ. Christ through the Holy Spirit gives us the inner capacity to transform our lives in conformity with the Father's will for us. Jesus the way, truth and life (Jn 14:6) is the universal objective norm of human existence.**

Note: Pope John Paul II emphasizes following Jesus; both Popes Benedict and Francis emphasize having a personal relationship with Jesus; Pope Francis also highlights openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- * **The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is "an organic presentation of the Catholic faith in its entirety."(38) Although it is not a theology manual Cardinal Pio Laghi, Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, in an address in 1997 at the University of Toronto, said, "Nevertheless, [the CCC] can serve as a sure point of reference for both professors and students as well as a guide to the essential elements of Christian teaching which must be pursued in depth." Related to this Bohr says he references the CCC in his chapter notes when appropriate.**

In later parts of this course required reading includes reading related parts of the CCC which help specify the more general themes in the other readings introducing aspects of moral theology.

Slide 9: Video of Bishop Barron on Modernity and Morality 11 min.

Please watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0sspv5npis> (11 min.)

Discussion Question 3: Do you agree with Bishop Barron regarding the loss of sense of Aristotle's formal and final causes and what has been lost especially regarding art and morality?

Discussion Question 4: With regard to our contemporary cultural situation what obstacles and/or challenges do you see with regard to the presentation, explanation and reception of Christian morality including Catholic teachings among baptized Catholics?

Discussion Question 5: What opportunities for personal moral growth and becoming saints exist today? How can moral theology contribute to this?

My View re Q 4: regarding our culture consider also the sexual revolution and permissiveness regarding sexual and personal morality but often “no mercy” regarding clergy sexual abuse. Also consider the pervasive influence of the media—television and movies, music, and lyrics, many in politics wanting to exclude those with religious or moral convictions (e.g., pro-life).

My view re 5: The Apostle Paul says where sin abounds God’s grace superabounds. Consider, e.g., many new Christian movements including L’Arche, Focolare, Communion and Liberation, Opus Dei, the Catholic Women’s League, Knights of Columbus; consider, e.g., the development of the pro-life movement including pregnancy crisis centres and other means of help to poor or young women with unexpected pregnancies, and of the newer methods of natural family planning or fertility awareness—there are many opportunities for people to be evangelized and serve. I think moral theology can contribute this by helping clergy and other counsellors to be better equipped to help people develop informed and well-formed consciences. This can help people appreciate the reasons for the norms of Catholic teaching and so forth and want to follow them rather than out of simple fear or rejecting them because they seem out of date or irrelevant or arbitrary.

Slide 10: William E. May



-author of our textbook, *An Introduction to Moral Theology*

-lived 1928-2014 (86 years)

-taught for many years at the Catholic University of America and the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family in Washington, D.C.

-married in 1958 (for 56 years), had 7 children and many grandchildren

-author of many articles and books

-a faithful Catholic moral theologian

William E. May (born May 27, 1928; died December 13, 2014) was an American Catholic theologian who was the Michael J. McGivney Emeritus Professor of Moral Theology at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC where he taught from 1991 to 2008. He previously taught moral theology at The Catholic University of America from 1971 to 1991. Dr. May has also lectured and taught at various universities around the world. William May published many articles and

books including among others *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, and *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*. He attempted to always write as a faithful Catholic in unity with the Magisterium. William May was married to Patricia in 1958, together with her they raised seven children, and had many grandchildren.

I had the opportunity to meet Dr. May more than once including visiting him in his office in the Fall of 2000 and having lunch with him on another occasion. He was quite a character who sometimes used blunt language and smoked a cigar. At one conference I attended when he was already quite old, he sat in the front row, with his head down and was seemingly asleep during a talk. As soon as the talk finished, however, he raised his hand and a penetrating question.

Slide 11: William May Required Reading for Module / Week 1: A Few Highlights

- * **The Nature of Moral Theology: Philosophical ethics involves the systematic effort by human intelligence alone to discover who we are and what we are to do, if we are to become who we are meant to be. Moral theology involves this endeavor with reason informed by faith.**
- * **The Purpose of Moral Theology: Moral theology is concerned with actions. The actions we freely choose to do give to ourselves our identity. Another purpose of moral theology is to help us to become saints, to become fully the beings God wants us to be.**
- * **The Renewal of Moral Theology: Vatican Council II in *Optatam totius*, n. 16, spoke of the need to renew moral theology drawing from Scripture and the exalted vocation of Christians. How successful has this been?**

From Fr. Robert Gauthier's week 1 notes for this course: May develops three points related to this field: the Nature of Moral Theology, the Purpose of Moral Theology, and the Renewal of Moral Theology. The Nature of Moral Theology speaks about morality, about the Christian moral life. In moral life, we find two major verbs: being and doing. According to May (p. 1), our moral life could be described this way: it is the endeavor, the "systematic effort to discover who we are (= being) and what we are to do (= doing) if we are to be fully the beings we are meant to be". This effort to discover who we are and what we are to do: it could be carried out exclusively using human intelligence. We are then in "the domain of moral philosophy or ethics." Ethics is "the philosophical study of human morality" (May, p. 28). Discover who we are (= verb being) and what we are to do (= verb doing): this effort could be "undertaken by those whose human intelligence is informed by Christian faith". We are then in the domain of moral theology. Regarding knowing who we are in the light of faith, we know these (revealed) truths: Gn 1: 27 says that we are the only creatures made "in the image [and likeness] of God". Human beings have a unique, a special dignity. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 21: through faith, we know these other truths: God has created man, man and woman He created them, God created man "as an intelligent and free being"; our being impacts our doing: we have to act intelligently, reasonably not foolishly; created as a free being, we should not act as a slave (to disordered passions or desires); but act as sons and daughters, men and women are also "called to intimacy with God and to share in his happiness". To the questions "Who are we?" and "Who are we called to be?", Christian faith gives these answers": by our Baptism, by our intimate union with Christ, we are truly children of God, members of the divine family, called to eternal life; as sons and daughters

in the Son, we must in our actions, in our moral deeds do what is pleasing to the Father, that is, to love as Christ has loved us and shape our ethical choices, our moral actions in accordance to the commands of Christ. Morality: there are different norms; Christ is the supreme moral norm.

The Purpose of Moral Theology”: On p. 26 of his book, May says that “[m]oral theology is a systematic reflection on the Christian moral life”. Moral theology is concerned with actions, with human actions, with human conduct. Our human acts, the actions we choose to do: through them, we freely give to ourselves our identity. Another purpose of moral theology is to help us to become saints, to become fully the beings God wants us to be.

The Renewal of Moral Theology: The Vatican Council II, in its document *Optatam totius*, has invited the Catholic Church to renew the study of moral theology.

Discussion Question 6: More than fifty years after the Council, what is the state of morality? How is the moral teaching of the Catholic Church understood and received?

My (Paul Flaman’s) highlights regarding the required reading from May, pp. 23-31:

Nature of moral theology: Regarding knowing who we are and what we are to do to be fully the beings we are meant to be May speaks of sin as the great disabling factor and of the God made known in Jesus Christ as the great enabling factor, as well as the Church, Jesus’ beloved spouse. GS, n. 22: by the Incarnation God has united himself with each man and raised human nature to a dignity beyond compare; in Jesus God reconciled us to himself and to one another; and set an example for us. We are called to be other Christs and share in the glory of the Risen Christ in unending communion with the Holy Trinity (p. 25). There is a radical unity of theology: the truths of salvation are central to understanding the Christian moral life, a life of holiness (26).

Purpose of moral theology: Regarding its focus on human actions moral theology is occupied with the principles and norms or moral truths meant to help us make good moral choices, as well as the factors that help or hinder us to do so (27). **Renewal of moral theology:** both Vatican II (OT, n. 14) and John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, highlighted the complementarity of reason and faith, of sound philosophy and revealed truth, including regarding morality. Vatican II spoke of the need to renew moral theology (quote from *Optatum Totius*, n. 16 (read the quotation at the bottom of p. 29 in May re drawing from Scripture and the exalted vocation of Christians). In *Vatican Council II and the Renewal of Moral Theology*, Matthew Gutowski points out (read from May, bottom of p. 30) the five pedagogical and methodological elements that the Council fathers considered integral to the renewal of moral theology.

If you have not already done so please do the required reading for Module 1 from May, pp. 23-31.

Discussion Question 7: Comment briefly on one or more points in the required reading by May.

Slide 12: A Few Other Points of Introduction (cf. recent popes):

- **Saint Pope John Paul II: in *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), n. 34, taught that there is no gradualness of the moral law of God but humans are historical beings who learn and grow morally in steps. In VS (1993) he reflects on the whole of the Church’s moral teaching recalling certain fundamental moral truths in a situation of numerous doubts and objections, also within the Christian community itself (n. 5).**

- **Cardinal Ratzinger / Pope Benedict XVI:** as head of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was involved in censoring several theologians including the moral theologian Charles Curran. As pope in an interview he explains why on a papal trip he did not speak of abortion, contraception, etc. Many perceive Catholic moral teaching as “negative” without appreciating the Good News of Jesus Christ and positive values such as life. He also is known for affirming that there is nothing more beautiful than our personal relationship with Jesus.

Related to this I recall reading a newspaper report of a trip by Pope John Paul II which only referred to a few “don’ts” which in reality were only short excerpts from his talks. The newspaper article ignored the fact that most of his talks focused on the Good News of Jesus Christ, and positive values such as life, and our personal relationship with Jesus;

- **Pope Francis:** is very much a pastor and follows John Paul II re no gradualness of God’s moral law, and accompanying people including in irregular situations, and helping them to develop enlightened consciences and discern what God is asking of them now, what steps to take. Several times he has said that the teaching of moral theology must include the full moral teaching of the Church (*Amoris Laetitia*, nn. 295, 300, 308). His Apostolic Letter on the Call to Holiness *Gaudete et Exsultate* points out that God does not want us to settle for mediocrity but to experience the fullness of life, to become saints.

Discussion Question 8: Comment briefly on any of these points of recent popes that are relevant to moral theology.

Slide 13: Next Week / Module 2 focuses on the Bible and Morality

- * **Quote from Gal 5:16-26:** “Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.
- * **Jesus related all of morality to the great commandments of love and calls us to love one another as he loves us—this is the most positive worthwhile way to live.**

Note: if you have not yet read the related required reading for this module please do so. Also, if you have not yet done so, please respond to two or more of the numbered discussion questions above and to the responses of two or more other students following the guidelines

in the Course Outline / Syllabus, p. 2, Course Requirements, n. 1 regarding Online Sharing.

I ended the week one (Module 1) class with Lord's Prayer: Our Father...