

Natural Morality (Natural Moral Law)

PERSONAL MORALITY: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Australian laws and our Federal Constitution still contain a deal of the Bible — Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21, as revealed by God to Moses, 13th century B.C. (or 14th or 12th ?) — thus:-

1. God Almighty: pre-ambles to Constitution and use of the Lord's Prayer in Parliament.
2. His Name not taken in vain: hence swearing into office and oaths in court in God's Name.
3. Keep holy the Lord's (Sabbath) day: workers' right to a weekly day-off for rest and worship.
4. Honour father and mother: upholding of marriage and family life — until recently!
5. Duty to defend human life from murder — now weakened by abortion and euthanasia.
6. Duty to defend marriage from adultery — now abandoned, or even approved as "P.C."!
7. Duty to defend property from theft — more or less upheld.
8. Prohibition on false witness — more or less upheld..
9. Duty to avoid lustful thoughts — now little protection from pornography.
10. Duty to avoid covetous thoughts — never could be law, but socially desirable.

The Code of Hammurabi from Babylon, 18th century B.C., has six of the Ten Commandments. It is a pagan testimony to natural morality (natural moral law), though in a motley mix with civil edicts and laced with penalties so draconian as to make Leviticus read like a toddler's tale at a Sunday School picnic.

SOCIAL MORALITY: SUBSIDIARITY and SOLIDARITY

Each these principles as simple truths of good philosophy rather than as "Catholic Social Teaching"

1. How is social philosophy based on natural morality?

Social philosophy is based on natural morality:

1. Man is created by God, in His image;
2. with the dignity of being a person;
3. that is, with an intellect and freedom;
4. called to an eternal destiny with God;
5. with God-given rights and duties;
6. blessed by God to live in society;
7. which has authority to uphold rights.

2. Why is social philosophy complicated?

Social philosophy is complicated because the exercise of personal rights may have to be limited by society to ensure the rights of others in that the purpose of society is to uphold the common good.*

* A "good" is a perfection or purpose, e.g. "A struggle to make good."

THE COMMON GOOD

3. What is the common good?

The common good is the social benefit in which every person shares and which society has a duty to uphold to ensure the natural human rights of everyone. It is not the greatest good of the greatest number, nor is it decided by majority vote. The common good is not the same as the public good; the public good is the means by which the political society supports the common good.

SUBSIDIARITY, a social Right: "All for one"

4. What is the principle of subsidiarity?

The principle of subsidiarity* is that society exists for the sake of persons and not persons for the sake of society, so society must help persons and smaller societies to function, and not usurp them, so that they enjoy freedom and rights and share in the common good.

* Subsidiarity is being supportive; subsidiary means subordinate.

SOLIDARITY, a social Duty — "One for all"

5. What is the principle of solidarity?

The principle of solidarity* is that every person and smaller society has a duty to make society workable by accepting its authority and so to contribute to the common good.

* Solidarity implies that some subordination is necessary.

"ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL"*

6. What ensures both personal freedom and social order within society?

Personal freedom and social order are ensured by a proper balance between subsidiarity and solidarity so that the common good is upheld. The common good is supportive of the person and the person is subordinate to the common good.

* More or less, "all for one" is subsidiarity, and "one for all" is solidarity.

SOCIAL EVILS

7. What happens if subsidiarity or solidarity is ignored?

If subsidiarity is ignored, an excessive emphasis on solidarity leads to socialism and totalitarianism, whether fascism or communism; if solidarity is ignored, an excessive emphasis on subsidiarity leads to capitalism and individualism.*

* To disregard these dangers is to rush headlong into the quicksands of Modernism in the moral, juridical and social order, said Pius XI, 1931, in *Quadragesimo Anno* §46.

SOCIETY, FAMILY AND PERSON

8. When is socialization justifiable?

Socialization is justifiable only as a last resort. "The function of the State's authority is twofold: to protect and foster families and individuals, but neither to absorb them nor substitute itself for them."*

* Pope Pius XI, 1929, *Divini illius magistri* §19

Catholic Family Catechism Apostles' Edition nn. 458-471

“Confession of the Christian Faith” also means upholding Natural Morality

Morality for Politicians

Christians politicians need to uphold natural law morality in union with all men of goodwill:-

Political structuring and organization of social life... task of the lay faithful... on their own initiative... with the common good in view... conforming with the Gospel and the teaching of the Church... (CCC n. 2442)

NO ONE CAN NEGATE IN-BUILT MORALS — not even politicians and professors

Thus declared Cicero, a pagan Roman lawyer, 106-43 B.C.

IF IT WERE not grounded in nature there would be no justice, and all virtues would cease to exist. How otherwise can magnanimity, love of one's country, *pietas*, meriting the good opinion of others and honouring obligations, exist? For these arise from the fact that we are by *nature* inclined to love our fellow men. This is the foundation of justice. Were this not so, then respect for our fellow men, and for the ceremonies and religions of the gods would cease — things that must be preserved, not out of fear but because of the link that exists between man and god [*in coniunctione quae est homini cum deo*]. If what is *just* is decided by the will of the people, or by decrees of princes or sentences of judges, then thievery could be *lawful*, as could adultery and perjury — if such were determined by the votes or opinions of the mob. Were such power to arise from the opinions and commands of unwise people, then by their will the very nature of things would be turned on its head. What is to stop such people declaring evil and pernicious things to be good and sound? If such ‘law’ [based on opinion] can make unjust things *just*, what's to stop it making evil things, good? Nature is the norm that enables us to distinguish a good law from a bad one. And it's not only justice and injustice that are judged by their nature, but also, of course, what is honourable and what is dishonourable. For, as common sense makes clear to us, and instills in our minds from our very beginnings, honour is derived from virtue, and dishonour from vice. It would be madness to think that their reality is determined by people's opinion rather than by their very essence.

Cicero, De Legibus, Liber Primus §§ 43-45; transl. by Father Paul Stenhouse MSC, Annals Australasia 2/2017

Cicero speaks of it again in another passage:-

THERE IS in fact a true law, namely right reason, which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal. By its commands this law summons men to the performance of their duties; by its prohibitions it restrains them from doing wrong. Its commands and prohibitions always influence good men, but are without effect upon the bad.

To invalidate this law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict its operation and to annul it wholly is impossible. Neither the Senate [of ancient republican Rome] nor the people can absolve us from our obligation to obey this law, and it requires no Sextus Aelius [a famous politician] to expound and interpret it. It will not lay down one rule at Rome and another at Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times and upon all peoples; and there will be, as it were, one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter and its sponsor.

Cicero, Republic III, 22 (trans. by Brother Christian Moe FSC)

St Paul also proclaimed objective moral goodness as a law “written in our hearts” (Romans 2:15).

CIVIL LAW

Parliaments make civil law about justice; civil law is not about love or feelings.

God makes Divine Law about justice and love and feelings.

Laws are an alternative to dictatorial government by decree and not by law.

Civil laws harmonize relationships in society and so must deal with new situations, imposing obligations for behaviour, but always in accord with natural morality. They can change the details but not the underlying morality. They can confer various civil rights, but not abolish natural human rights.

Parliaments need to debate the limits of their authority, that they can't do anything they like. “We get the politicians we deserve,” and many now reject God, Conscience and Commandments, so they are quickly exhausting their inherited dwindling little stocks of moral capital into a moral bankruptcy.

ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

“Political Correctness” from today's social engineers reverses true priorities. A State-organized economy exists for the people, a means to end, not people sacrificed to the economy.

Forcing mothers into paid work is bad for children. See Dr Peter Cook's *Mothering Matters*.

Indeed, great economies would be achieved if society **upheld God, His Laws, human Conscience**. Conscience is “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12 KJV). Taxation could be reduced if the Ten Commandments were government policy and taught in state schools as standards for our society. It is in family life that we learn “no murder, adultery, theft or lies”. But first we must honour God and not insult Him..