

ETHICAL REFLECTION ON PASTORAL PRACTICE

RGT 1905 HF

Mary Rowell, CSJ, PhD.

Thursday: 4:30 – 6:30 pm (Room C)

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Office hours by appointment (Room 215)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores foundational theoretical issues in moral theology applied to pastoral practice. The course includes lectures, discussions and seminars. Seminars focus upon specific cases and require an additional hour attendance each week excepting week 1 and exam week. During discussions and seminars we will be less concerned with “hot button issues” than with coming to an understanding of how one makes ethical decisions personally and so as to better support and enable others in their ethical discernment and decision-making. We will pay attention to questions from a variety of contexts: medical, parochial, educational and social, for example. Students are encouraged to suggest concrete issues for discussion during the course.

COURSE GOALS: To provide students with:

- ◆ the background knowledge and critical thinking skills to appreciate more deeply the teaching of the Christian tradition in matters of ethical reflection and conduct;
- ◆ the fundamental concepts and principles employed in contemporary post-Vatican II moral theology so that they are better able to explore the complexities of current ethical issues;
- ◆ an overview of the scope of Roman Catholic moral theology, its contemporary scholarship, and some developments in its recent renewal;
- ◆ an appreciation for the link between faith, spiritual life, morality and reason;
- ◆ approaches to the process of moral discernment to enable them to support and empower others in ethical decision-making.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The course will help students to:

- ◆ identify and analyze current ethical debates from the perspective of Christian moral theology;
- ◆ apply contemporary Roman Catholic moral theology to pastoral concerns;
- ◆ develop a systematic, faith-based approach to ethical reflection;
- ◆ develop capacity in the process of moral discernment and apply it to the pastoral setting.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Each class will include a lecture and some discussion. Additionally, there will be a weekly seminar. Each of the course components will reflect the content of the course readings and will seek to draw out their practical significance. Given the importance of the readings students are expected to have read the texts critically, trying to understand their relevance with respect to their particular ministry situations.

The small-group, case-study seminars have a particular focus. They aim to help students apply class material to concrete situations. During the semester, each student will lead one case discussion through a short (**no more than 15 minutes**) exploration of the key issues raised by the case. All students will then enter into case discussion.

The cases proposed, derive from actual situations (some fictionalization ensures that confidentiality is maintained) and they relate directly to the topic under consideration in class for the week. They are cumulative in nature; they presuppose work completed in previous weeks. **They have no perfect answer**; the point is rather to understand how Catholic moral teaching functions.

REQUIRED READING

Timothy O'Connell. *Making Disciples: A Handbook of Christian Moral Formation*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998.

Mark O' Keefe. *Becoming Good, Becoming Holy: On the Relationship of Christian Ethics and Spirituality*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005.

An additional "reader" is provided for the course to supplement the required text books.

EVALUATION

Three reflection papers (approximately 6 pages in length double-spaced) during the course of the semester. One paper **must** focus on the case the student will present for seminar. Each student will then select any two seminar cases as subjects for the remaining papers. The first paper is to be submitted by **October 21st**, the second paper by **November 18th**. and the third by **December 9th**. **The point of these papers is not to "solve the problem" but to note the use and limits of moral thought in dealing with the issues at hand.**

Each student will also take a 15 minute oral examination during the University examination week. The form of the exam will be discussed, in good time, with the students during the semester. Additionally, students will receive a grade for participation during class and seminars

RELATIVE WEIGHT OF VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE COURSE

Course participation and seminar preparation	10%
Reflection papers (each)	20%
Oral examination	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

Papers: All papers are to be double-spaced with 1 ½ inch margins and properly referenced according to Kate Turabian's *A Style Manual for Writers of Term Papers*. The font should be Times New Roman 12 or its equivalent in size. Please refer to the class handout on bibliographic and footnote styles. Please also refer to the "Writing at the University of Toronto" website for advice on effective writing skills. This website can be found at: (<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/index.html>) Please pay particular attention to the advice on avoiding plagiarism. (<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>) All papers must be submitted by their due date. For a guide to the grading of papers at the Toronto School of Theology, please refer to: <http://www.tst.edu/degree/basic/grading.htm>.

Inclusive Language: Some of the readings used in this course – especially those of a less contemporary nature – lack gender inclusive language. Nevertheless, students are expected to use gender inclusive language at all times.

Class Participation: Students are expected to attend all classes. Absence from more than two classes normally results in a grade of "incomplete". Students are expected to have read the required readings in preparation for each class. Participation requires informed and intelligent discourse by the student on the issues or topics being discussed on any given week. **Mere attendance at class is not participation and does not gain the student any grade.**

COURSE OUTLINE RGT 1905

September 16 – Introduction to the Course and the Moral Problem and its Many Dimensions

- ◆ O'Connell, chs. 1-2
- ◆ Richard Gula. "The Shifting Landscape of Moral Theology", Church Magazine (Spring, 2009) full text available at http://www.churchmagazine.org/issue/0903/upf_shifting_landscape.php
- ◆ James Keenan. "Toward an Inclusive Vision of Moral Theology. Part 1: A Look to the Past", *Pacifica* 12 (1999): 249-263
- ◆ Douglas Porpora. **Landscapes of the Soul: The Loss of Moral Meaning in American Life**, Introduction (2003): 1-23
- ◆ International Theological Commission. "Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God". *Origins* 34: 15 (September 23, 2004): 233; 235-248

September 23 – The Way of Knowing – Conscience

- ◆ O'Connell, chs. 3-4
- ◆ Richard Gula. "Conscience", in Bernard Hoose, ed. **Christian Ethics: An Introduction** (2000)110-122
- ◆ James Keating. "The Conscience Imperative as Prayer", *Irish Theological Quarterly* 63 (1998): 65-89
- ◆ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI). **On Conscience: Conscience and Truth**, (2007): 11-41

September 30 – Interior Life as an Element of Moral Knowing

- ◆ O'Connell, chs. 5-8
- ◆ G. Simon Harak. *Virtuous Passions: The Formation of Christian Character* (2001): 1-49
- ◆ Kenneth Himes. "The Formation of Conscience: the Sin of Sloth and the Significance of Spirituality", in James Keating, ed. *Spirituality and Moral Theology* (2000): 59-80

October 7 – Knowing and Narrative – A Key Dialogue

- ◆ O’Connell, chs. 9-11
- ◆ John Staudenmaier. “Restoring the Lost Art: Storytelling, Electronic Media and Fragmented Discourse”, **The Way** 28 (1988): 313-322
- ◆ Robert Coles. **The Moral Intelligence of Children** (1999), chs. 1-2
- ◆ Richard Gula. “Let the Mind of Christ be in You: Moral Formation and the Imagination”, **TD** 51:4 (Winter 2004): 315-323

October 14 – Narratives in Culture – Ways of Shared Meaning

- ◆ Christopher P. Vogt. “Practicing Patience, Compassion and Hope at the End of Life: Mining the Passion of Jesus in Luke for a Christian Model of Dying Well”, **Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics** 24 (2004): 135-158
- ◆ William C. Spohn. “Conscience and Moral Development”, **Theological Studies** 61 (2000): 122-138

October 21 – The Christian Narrative and the Christian Moral Life * [Reflection paper 1 due](#)*

- ◆ O’Connell, chs. 12-14
- ◆ O’Keefe, **Becoming Good, Becoming Holy**, ch. 1
- ◆ James Alison. **Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination** (1996): ch. 2
- ◆ William Spohn. **Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics** (1999): ch. 1

N.B. Reading Week: October 25-29 During Reading Week please read and reflect upon the **Dogmatic Constitution on the Church – *Lumen Gentium* – The Documents of Vatican II***

November 4– The Person of Jesus and the Life of the Spirit

- ◆ O’Keefe, ch. 3
- ◆ Monica Hellwig. “Christology and Attitudes Toward Social Structures” in Thomas Clarke, ed. **Above very Name: The Lordship of Christ and Social Systems** (1980): 13-34
- ◆ Margaret Farley. “History, Spirituality and Justice”, **Theology Digest** 45 (1998): 329-336

November 11 –The Community of Faith as Lived Tradition

- ◆ O’Keefe, ch. 6
- ◆ Paul VI. “The Church’s Guidance for an Age of Freedom”, **The Pope Speaks** 14 (1969): 92-95
- ◆ Richard R. Gaillardetz. **By What Authority? A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium and the Sense of the Faithful** (2003): 107-133

November 18 – Moral Rules and the Life of Faith ***Reflection paper 2 due***

- ◆ O’ Keefe, ch. 7
- ◆ Bernard Hoose. “Intuition and Moral Theology”, **Theological Studies** 67 (2006): 602-624

November 25 – Growth in the Moral Life

- ◆ O’Keefe, ch. 2
- ◆ Timothy O’Connell. “A Theology of Sin”, **Chicago Studies** 21 (1982): 277-292
- ◆ Peter Black: “The Broken Wings of Eros: Christian Ethics and the Denial of Desire”, **Theological Studies** 64 (2003): 106-126

December 2 – The Challenge of a World of Limits

- ◆ O’Keefe, ch. 8
- ◆ Kenneth Himes and James Coriden. “Pastoral Care of the Divorced and Remarried”, **Theological Studies** 57 (1996): 97-133
- ◆ Norbert Rigali. “The Unity of Moral and Pastoral Truth”, **Chicago Studies** 25 (1986): 225-232

December 9 – The “End” of the Moral Life ***Reflection paper 3 due***

- ◆ O’Keefe, ch. 4
- ◆ Michael R. Panicola. “Discernment in the Neonatal Context”, **Theological Studies** 60 (1999): 723-746
- ◆ Edward C. Vacek. “Gifts, God, Generosity and Gratitude” in James Keating, ed. **Spirituality and Moral Theology** (2000): 81-125

***N.B. Exam Week: December 13-17. Oral Exams will be scheduled to take place during this week**

