

Link to Liturgy



4th Sunday of Easter Good and Evil

Link to Liturgy provides fast, free, & faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life.

Link to Liturgy is a resource of Communities of Prayer; please find out more at communitiesofprayer.com or scan the QR code to Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.



Lessons and Discussions

Page 4 – What is Good?

“I give them eternal life”

Page 8 – What is Evil?

“they shall never perish”

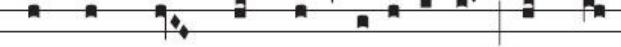
Page 13 – Virtue and Vice

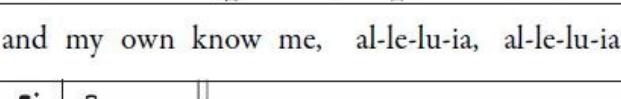
“and they follow me”

Communion Antiphon (John 20:14) – Simple English Propers

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme.

Ego sum pastor bonus Jn 20:14

II

I am the good shepherd, al-le-lu-ia; I know my

sheep and my own know me, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.


Alternative Options:

At the Lamb's High Feast
Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation
Good Christian Men, Rejoice and Sing
The King of Love My Shepherd Is
Do you Know Him? (Remnant)
Limitless (Remnant)
Who are You? (Remnant)

Collect -Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Almighty ever-living God,
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,
so that the humble flock may reach
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – John 10:27-30 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
 - Glory to you O Lord

Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

The Gospel of the Lord.
 - Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – 4th Sunday of Easter – Office of Readings

From a homily on the Gospels by Saint Gregory the Great, pope
Christ the good shepherd

I am the good shepherd. I know my own—by which I mean, I love them—and my own know me. In plain words: those who love me are willing to follow me, for anyone who does not love the truth has not yet come to know it.

My dear brethren, you have heard the test we pastors have to undergo. Turn now to consider how these words of our Lord imply a test for yourselves also. Ask yourselves whether you belong to his flock, whether you know him, whether the light of his truth shines in your minds. I assure you that it is not by faith that you will come to know him, but by love; not by mere conviction, but by action. John the evangelist is my authority for this statement. He tells us that *anyone who claims to know God without keeping his commandments is a liar.*

Consequently, the Lord immediately adds: *As the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.* Clearly he means that laying down his life for his sheep gives evidence of his knowledge of the Father and the Father's knowledge of him. In other words, by the love with which he dies for his sheep he shows how greatly he loves his Father.

Again he says: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them; they follow me, and I give them eternal life.* Shortly before this he had declared: *If anyone enters the sheepfold through me he shall be*

saved; he shall go freely in and out and shall find good pasture. He will enter into a life of faith; from faith he will go out to vision, from belief to contemplation, and will graze in the good pastures of everlasting life.

So our Lord's sheep will finally reach their grazing ground where all who follow him in simplicity of heart will feed on the green pastures of eternity. These pastures are the spiritual joys of heaven. There the elect look upon the face of God with unclouded vision and feast at the banquet of life for ever more.

Beloved brothers, let us set out for these pastures where we shall keep joyful festival with so many of our fellow citizens. May the thought of their happiness urge us on! Let us stir up our hearts, rekindle our faith, and long eagerly for what heaven has in store for us. To love thus is to be already on our way. No matter what obstacles we encounter, we must not allow them to turn us aside from the joy of that heavenly feast. Anyone who is determined to reach his destination is not deterred by the roughness of the road that leads to it. Nor must we allow the charm of success to seduce us, or we shall be like a foolish traveler who is so distracted by the pleasant meadows through which he is passing that he forgets where he is going.

Responsory – Office of Readings - John 10:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 5:7

The Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep has risen from the dead.

– For the sake of the flock he willingly suffered death, alleluia.

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.

– For the sake of the flock he willingly suffered death, alleluia.

What is Good? – Lesson and Discussion

“I give them eternal life”

What is good? Good is “whatever is suitable or befitting someone or something...it is that which all things tend toward or desire. The good is the desirable, and therefore the object of the natural (or supernatural) needs or tendencies of a being.”[1]

Is goodness relative? Does each individual determine what is suitable or befitting to themselves? In the Mark’s Gospel, “a man ran up, knelt down before him [Jesus], and asked him,

- [12] Chris Stefanick; *Absolute Relativism*
- [13] Blessed John Paul II
- [14] Pope Benedict XVI
- [15] Pope Benedict XVI
- [16] Pope Benedict XVI
- [17] Blessed Mother Teresa
- [18] Blessed John Paul II
- [19] cf. Jn. 14:6
- [20] Jn. 10:28
- [21] Chris Stefanick; *Absolute Relativism*
- [22] Blessed John Paul II; St. Louis, January 26, 1999
- [23] Deut. 30:19
- [24] The Penny Catechism
- [25] Psalm 34:15
- [26] 1 Peter 3:10-11
- [27] Glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- [28] Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI); September 26, 2003
- [29] Chris Stefanick; *Absolute Relativism*
- [30] Glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- [31] John 10:27

Marian Antiphon – Regina Caeli – Simple Tone

6.

R Egína caéli * laetáre, alle-lú-ia : Qui- a quem me-
ru- ísti portáre, alle-lú-ia : Resurréxit, sic-ut dixit, alle-
lú-ia : Ora pro nó-bis Dé-um, alle-lú- ia.

V. Guade et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.
R. Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia

Let us pray. O God, who by the Resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, didst vouchsafe to make glad the whole world; grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. AMEN

English Translation

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia; For He whom thou didst merit to bear, alleluia, has risen as He said, alleluia: Pray fro us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia!
R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia!

“The End” Notes

- [1] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.; *Modern Catholic Dictionary*
- [2] Mark 10:17-18
- [3] 2nd Reading, Office of Readings, 4th Sunday of Easter
- [4] *ibid.*
- [5] *ibid.*
- [6] Penny Catechism
- [7] The Order of the Mass
- [8] Isaiah 53:7
- [9] Revelation 12:7-9
- [10] Isaiah 5:20-21
- [11] Quoted by Chris Stefanick in *Absolute Relativism*

‘Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone....’[2] In the story of the Rich Young Ruler, we see that “good” is not subjective (determined by the subject or person) but objective (based on facts, not determined by personal, individual opinion or feelings). We cannot say “food” is not good, because our body needs and desires food and therefore as the tendency to eat. Food is good and to say food is not good is to deny reality. We can have a preference for “types” of food, preferring one type over another, but we can’t say food in general is not good because that is not true.

Saint Augustine says that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. We are familiar with the science of an atom, which contains a nucleus with neutrons and protons and outer rings or shells which consists of electrons. **What is the nature of the electron?** Electrons have a negative charge and are attracted, drawn toward protons in the nucleus. Electrons will then naturally fill the electron shells from the center and then move outward. In other words, for an electron, the tendency, need, desire is the nucleus. Each individual is like an electron and God is our nucleus, and whether a person knows it or not, the tendency, desire, and need of his soul is God. God is the good and the only good. Anything in life is only good in that it is created by God and shares in the goodness of God.

VIDEO – Protons, neutrons, electrons, and isotopes – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:51

<http://youtu.be/zEX2aGpIDBY>

This video shows the elements of what was said above in regards to protons, neutrons, and electrons.

What if a person’s tendency is not toward God? What if a person does not desire God? What if a person feels they do not need God? We do not determine our tendencies, desires, and/or needs. The tendency, desire, and need can only be satisfied in God; We can only find rest in God, our creator. We are ordered, directed toward God. When our tendency is to go away from God, we are disordered because God is all good, knowing, and brings about true order. This tendency to go away from God, rather than toward Him, to choose evil rather than good is called concupiscence. When our desire is evil rather than good, our desires are disordered. If we feel that we do not need God we are mistaken, we exist and stay in existence because God creat-

ed us and if it were not for God we would cease to exist.

TV SHOW – Family Guy Do not push button – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:11

<http://youtu.be/LkO0TB3fCIU>

Peter can't help himself to push the button even though it tells him not to. The desire to be disobedient is an elementary way of explaining concupiscence.

Saint Gregory the Great says in the Spiritual Reading, "Again he says: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them; they follow me, and I give them eternal life.* Shortly before this he had declared: *If anyone enters the sheepfold through me he shall be saved; he shall go freely in and out and shall find good pasture.* He will enter into a life of faith; from faith he will go out to vision, from belief to contemplation, and will graze in the good pastures of everlasting life."^[3]

Our goal, destiny, direction, need, desire, tendency is God. Our desire, whether we cooperate with it or not is to know, love, and serve God. When we do not cooperate or fulfill this true desire of our soul, we get frustrated and although we might feel a temporal happiness, we do not experience joy and peace which is eternal. When we strive to know, love, and serve God in this life and ultimately in eternal life we find joy, peace, and fulfillment. We then "will graze in the good pastures of everlasting life."^[4]

Why is it good to not only have a goal, destiny, direction, and desire, but to clearly know what the goal, destiny, direction, and desire is? When we remember our end, our goal, our destiny we are able to stay the course and not get side tracked. Saint Gregory says in the Spiritual Reading, "Anyone who is determined to reach his destination is not deterred by the roughness of the road that leads to it. Nor must we allow the charm of success to seduce us, or we shall be like a foolish traveler who is so distracted by the pleasant meadows through which he is passing that he forgets where he is going."^[5]

Saint Gregory's analogy of the road connects with the four cardinal virtues. Prudence is the virtue, which helps us to know the good and avoid evil; it helps us to always keep in mind the goal, our destination – the good. Prudence helps us to know what is at the end of the road. Justice is the act of walking on the road. Justice is to give a person what they are rightly due. When we walk on the right road, we give God, self, and others what is

believe in the good., that their actually is a right thing. We have to believe in the good as revealed by Christ and His Church. Once we have come to know the truth and the good, it is then that we can begin to love the truth and the good. Saint Gregory says, "for anyone who does not love the truth has not yet come to know it" Our knowledge of truth and good and our love of truth and good lead to action, the "keeping of his commandments. Saint Gregory also says, "He [Saint John] tells us that *anyone who claims to know God without keeping his commandments is a liar.*" We should never be discouraged from doing the right thing, for if it is good, then it is possible. This is not possible for man alone, but with the grace of God.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Suscipe

Suscipe (from the Latin word "receive") is a short but powerful prayer attributed to St. Ignatius Loyola (pictured above). It can be found towards the end of his *Spiritual Exercises*, first published in the 16th century. He designed this work, still popular today both for retreats and private use, to bring souls closer to God through a series of meditations and prayers. Praying this prayer often reminds us that we are always to use our free will for good and not evil.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess, Thou hast given me: I surrender it all to Thee to be disposed of according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

disordered moral state in which our world finds itself. Speaking about the grave evils of our time – for example, the sexual abuse of minors by the clergy, the marketing of child pornography, sexual tourism, and the deadly abuse of drugs – he observed that they are all signs of ‘the tyranny of mammon which perverts mankind’ and they result from ‘a fatal misunderstanding of freedom which actually undermines man’s freedom and ultimately destroys it’[28]

Our world tells us that we are free and so we can do whatever we want. **Why is this wrong?** This is wrong because the world waters down the truth to make us think by doing whatever we want is good when actually we are free so that we can choose the good and avoid the evil. Good is absolute and determined by the one, true and good God. Moral relativism states that good is whatever each person determines good to be and thus to sin is to go against one’s own idea of what good is. Moral Relativism allows for a person to even change what they believe the good to be. Sin therefore according to the relativist is simply going against or not choosing the good that you yourself have determined. “When asked what sin is, then-President-elect Barack Obama summed up moral relativism beautifully by saying, ‘Being out of alignment with my values.’”[29]

MUSIC – “Vice Verses” by Switchfoot – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:19

<http://youtu.be/nJtR6Te0L3A>

The song speaks of the tension in our life: life/death, hope/despair, highs/lows, truth/lies, etc.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson What is Sin?]

What is virtue? – The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “A habitual and firm disposition to do the good. The moral virtues are acquired through human effort aided by God’s grace; the theological virtues are gifts of God.”[30] Jesus the Good Shepherd says of His flock, “I know them, and they follow me”[31]. In following Christ, we are called to virtue, to have the firm disposition to do the good.

It is our choice to live a life of vice or virtue.

What should we do if we are living a life of vice? First we need to realize that it is never too late to do the right thing. We can always begin avoid evil and pursue good. We have to first

right and just. We are reminded at every Mass that it is right and just to give thanks to the Lord our God. We are thankful to know the good and then to pursue the good.

POEM – “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:19

<http://youtu.be/5hwUrBgZeUA>

This poem, almost 100 years old, is still read in grade schools everywhere. It speaks of being met with two roads, and the person can only choose one. The person ends up choosing the one less traveled. Jesus tells us, “How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.” (Matthew 7:14) We use the virtues to stay on the road less traveled.

What then could pull us off course? Saint Gregory mentions two things. First, is the roughness of the road. We can be pulled off the road by fear. Fear can creep in and we can begin to think that due to the roughness of the road we “can’t” reach the goal. The cardinal virtue of courage enables us to stay the course when persecution, hardships, and obstacles discourage us. Second, is the charm of success to seduce us to feast in the pleasant meadows through which we pass by. We can be pulled off the road by our senses. While walking on the road we see something on the side of the road that distracts or entices us and we give up the greater good of heaven for the senses of the world or a lesser good of earth. The cardinal virtue of temperance helps us to keep all of our senses in moderation and also helps us to order all our sense toward the good and pleasing will of God.

“We must hate sin above all other evils, so as to be resolved never to commit a willful sin, for the love or fear of anything whatsoever.”[6] We are pulled of the road of goodness when we fear something or someone more than we fear God or when we love something or someone more than we love God.

In the collect of today’s Mass we pray, “Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before.” As the humble flock of the Good Shepherd we now on this earth share in the joys of heaven. However, only as a foretaste, an appetizer, of the main course which we will feast upon in heaven. At the Mass the priest holds up the Lamb of God, the Eucharist and says, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the

Lamb.”[7] We are called to feast at the supper of the Lamb, which is heaven, and we already share in the feast here on earth each time we assist at Mass. The next time we look at Our Lord in the Eucharist, let us remember that our Shepherd became a Lamb. For He had to become like a lamb to lead the lamb. It was necessary that the Shepherd of the lambs, would reveal Himself as the Lamb of God, “a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth.”[8] Saint Gregory says, “So our Lord’s sheep will finally reach their grazing ground where all who follow him in simplicity of heart will feed on the green pastures of eternity. These pastures are the spiritual joys of heaven. There the elect look upon the face of God with unclouded vision and feast at the banquet of life for ever more.”

What is Evil? – Lesson and Discussion

“they shall never perish”

Note – This lesson should be taught along with **Link to Liturgy**
Lesson – What is Good?

What is evil? Evil is “the privation of a good that should be present. It is the lack of good that essentially belongs to a nature; the absence of a good that is natural and due to a being. Evil is therefore the absence of what ought to be there.

Is evil equal to good? No. Evil presupposes good, in other words you can have good without evil, but to have evil you must first have good. In heaven there will only be good because evil does not exist. In the beginning there was only good. We see two falls in scripture. Lucifer and the fallen angels deprived themselves of good[9]. Thus, evil entered in, and then Adam and Eve deprived themselves of good by eating of the fruit thus evil entered into humanity. God only creates good, but He does not force us to choose the good. He allows us to deprive our self of good and thus evil exists. There have been heresies, false teachings, which have believed that there is a “good God” and an “evil god” who are equal in power and fighting for our soul. This is not true. God is all good, all mighty, and all powerful. God created Satan to be good; he [Satan] has chosen to deprive himself of the creator.

Why do we call things “bad” and not “evil”? Bad is a synonym for evil. Bad means “not good” or as said earlier, a privation of good. A car has a standard or a correct way to run. When the

Virtue and Vice – Lesson and Discussion

“Cast the net over the right side of the boat”

Note – This lesson should be taught in conjunction with **Link to Liturgy Lessons – What is Good? and What is Evil?**

“I call heaven and earth today to witness against you. I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.”[23] We have defined what good is, which is life and blessing, and that evil is death and curse.

We have been given free will, which Saint Bonaventure says is the second most powerful thing in the universe. Our free will enables us to choose: good or bad; life or death; blessing or curse; what will we choose?

“If we hope to be saved, we must follow the rule of life; we are bound always to hate sin and love God.”[24] This basic rule of life is spoken of by the Psalmist, “Turn from evil and do good”[25] and by Saint Peter the Apostle, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit, must turn from evil and do good...”[26]

What is sin? – The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “An offense against God as well as a fault against reason, truth, and right conscience. Sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the eternal law of God.”[27] Sin is when we deliberately use our free will to choose evil.

What is vice? Vice is a habit acquired by repeated sin. We fall into vice when we repeatedly misuse our free will.

Evil and good have been placed before us. God has given us free will to choose good and avoid evil. Sin, therefore, is a misuse of our free will. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do right we misuse our free will. When we misuse our free will we sin and deprive our self and others of good and we offend God, who is all good and deserving of all our love.

“In his 2010 Christmas address to the College of Cardinals, the Roman Curia, and the Gouvernate of Vatican City State, Pope Benedict XVI spoke clearly and strongly about the profoundly

6. Relativism makes it easy for those in authority to manipulate others.

"To educate without a value system based on truth is to abandon young people to moral confusion, personal insecurity, and easy manipulation." [18]

7. Relativism puts the freedom of speech under attack.

8. Relativism destroys faith.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - The Way, The Truth, The Life: Part II]

Relativism deprives each soul of good and truth. It causes each person and society to perish not only in the examples given above but in many other ways.

It is only Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life[19] that can save us from perishing, this is why Jesus assures us "they shall never perish." [20] "In Jesus Christ, God the Son made man; heaven has come to earth to dispel darkness of error and sin and to fill our souls with the light of truth and goodness." [21]

It is our obligation as a sheep to know our Good Shepherd. Blessed John Paul II challenged the youth of America to do this when he said, "You are children of the light (cf. Jn 12:36)! You belong to Christ, and he has called you by name. Your first responsibility is to get to know as much as you can about him, in your parishes, in religious instruction in your high schools and colleges, in your youth groups and Newman Centers. But you will get to know him truly and personally only through prayer. What is needed is that you talk to him, and listen to him. Today we are living in an age of instant communications. But do you realize what a unique form of communication prayer is? Prayer enables us to meet God at the most profound level of our being. It connects us directly to God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in a constant exchange of love. Through prayer you will learn to become the light of the world, because in prayer you become one with the source of our true light, Jesus himself." [22]

There are many voices in the world today, but will we hear His voice? Are we part of the flock and listening to the Good Shepherd?

Pope Saint Gregory the Great says, "Ask yourselves whether you belong to his flock, whether you know him, whether the light of his truth shines in your minds"

car is missing a part or not running correctly we say that it is a "bad" car. If we go to a concert and the music is not in the right key or the beat is off, we say that it was a "bad" concert. In sports if the players do not do what they are supposed to do and there is a turnover or interception, we say that it was a "bad" play. When we say "bad" we mean that the car, the music, the play is lacking the goodness. We get used to saying things are "bad" that the word "bad" becomes commonplace and we forget what it means. Bad is evil, it is a deprivation of good and deprives our self and others of good cannot be tolerated. When a play is bad, a team can lose the game, when our actions are bad (evil) we can lose salvation.

MOVIE – Remember the Titans – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:20

<http://youtu.be/i8vXroMMGdM>

In the regional championship game the referees were intentionally making bad calls. They were depriving the good of the game and affecting it to where one team would lose the game unfairly. When something is so blatantly bad it is hard to not to see it.

Can we ever mistake good for evil and evil for good? Yes. The prophet Isaiah says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who change darkness into light, and light into darkness, who change bitter into sweet, and sweet into bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own sight, and prudent in their own esteem" [10] All people desire good, the question is not if they desire good, but what do they think "the good" is. For example Adolf Hitler was wise in his own sight and prudent in his own esteem and he thought it was "good" to exterminate Jews and any other person opposed to him. He had mistaking good for evil and evil for good. Another example is abortion and birth control was promised to bring good things for families and marriages to America and the world. In the past fifty years divorce rates have skyrocketed, single-parent families have gone from 6% to over 40%, and we have had over fifty million innocent babies killed in America alone.

MUSIC – Michael Jackson - Bad – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:20

<http://youtu.be/dsUXAEzaC3Q>

It may seem trivial but in American culture the word "bad" was, and in some cases is still used as slang to mean "good". The trend has continued with slang term. Usually being "sick" is not a good thing, but "sick" became and is still used as slang for be-

ing good. Even the word “wicked” is used as slang to mean good. In pop culture through our terminology we have called evil good and good evil.

What is the result when we mistake good for evil and evil for good? The result is confusion and then the belief that good and bad is in the eye of the beholder. This is called moral relativism. Adolf Hitler’s ally Benito Mussolini was a relativist and said, “Everything I have said and done in the last years is relativism, but intuition. From the fact that all ideologies are of equal value, that all ideologies are mere fictions, the modern relativist infers that everybody has the right to create for himself his own ideology, and to attempt to enforce it with all the energy of which he is capable. If relativism signifies contempt for fixed categories and men who claim to be bearers of an objective immortal truth, then there is nothing more relativistic than fascism.”[11]

VIDEO – Benito Mussolini – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:16

<http://youtu.be/sLIfz4Obnro> / <http://youtu.be/80GsddGRzFs> (Full Version 46:04)

Here is a short bio of the rise of Mussolini and how he would try and control the message. The longer video speaks of how he thought he could get his way in this world by using violence and evil.

What is relativism? “Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger identified relativism as ‘the greatest problem of our time.’ Considering the times in which we live, that’s a big claim, and it’s one we can’t afford to ignore. Relativism is the idea that there is no universal, absolute truth but that truth differs from person to person and culture to culture. In other words, truth is relative to what each person or culture thinks.”[12]

Mussolini defined it best. Relativism is an ideology. Ideologies are subjective, from each person. All ideologies are of equal value. Because ideas are from people and all people are equal then all ideas are equal. All ideologies are mere fictions. We cannot know for sure, because nothing is absolute, that any ideologies are fact, so therefore all ideologies are fiction. We not only have a right to our own idea but we have the right to enforce all ideas with all our energy. Hitler and Mussolini definitely enforced their ideologies. The relativist does not believe that there are “fixed categories”, absolute truths, and certain facts. They also do not believe that truth is objective or immortal. In other words truth

is not revealed from God, for the relativist there is no divine revelation.

ACTIVITY – Absolute Relativism by Chris Stefanick

There is an excellent 59-page booklet published by Catholic Answers called Absolute Relativism. If you have a group of 12 or so, you can have each group read 5 pages and then discuss the questions and answers discussed in their section. This would be excellent for a retreat or series.

In the booklet Chris gives the following list of relativism’s bad effects. Selected quotes from these sections have been added to summarize the sections.

1. Relativism robs us of a sense of meaning.

“False teachers, many belonging to an intellectual elite in the worlds of science, culture, and the media, present an anti-gospel...When you ask them: What must I do?, their only certainty is that there is not definite truth, no sure path...

Consciously or not, they advocate an approach to life that has led millions of young people into a sad loneliness in which they are deprived of reasons for hope and are incapable of real love.”[13]

2. Relativism leaves us with no criterion for moral decision-making but personal taste.

“Relativism, which recognizes nothing as definitive, leaves as the ultimate criterion only the self with its desires.”[14]

3. Relativism deprives children of formation.

“Only in the truth does charity shine forth, only in truth can charity be authentically lived...Without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way. In a culture without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love.”[15]

4. Relativism separates us from one another.

“Under the semblance of freedom [relativism] becomes a prison for each one, for it separates people from one another, locking each person into his or her own ego.”[16]

5. Relativism undermines the right to life.

“If abortion isn’t wrong, what is?”[17]