

CHAPTER FIVE: THE GOODS WHICH FULFILL HUMAN PERSONS

A. The goodness of creation and evil as privation

5 Apart from the divine revelation there are two main conceptions of evil--that is, of badness in general. According to one of these, which underlies much Eastern religion and philosophy, evil is the appearance of multiplicity and disunity which is kept up by desire and striving. On this view, if one would only totally accept what is, conflict would cease and one would rejoin the totality. According to another view, diametrically
10 opposed to the first one, evil is a reality just as basic and irreducible as good. On this view, which has been held by manichaeism and other forms of dualism, reality is composed of two realms, each complete in itself: the realm of good and that of evil. The two are locked in permanent conflict, and one can only try to escape from the realm of evil into that of good.[1]

15 Neither of these conceptions of evil is completely satisfactory to anyone who reflects upon them.

If disunity is only an appearance, what about the disunity between this appearance and reality? Are desire and striving themselves real or only apparent? Perhaps there would be no evil if there were no desire. But would there be any good? For all its
20 nobility, Eastern religious thought seems in the end to idealize a condition which can hardly be distinguished from dreamless sleep, death, or nonbeing.

An absolute dualism is no more defensible. On this view, there must be an ultimate principle of evil, a god bad through and through, opposed to the ultimate principle of good. But we find evil in what is distorted, damaged, spoiled. The evil in what is
25 evil is precisely the distorting, damaging, corrupting factor. There must be something which undergoes this evil, and this something is not itself altogether bad. Thus, evil appears to be parasitical. Something totally evil would be like a shoe which not only was full of holes, but was nothing but holes, or like a disease so pervasive that there remained no organism to be sick. Cancer kills, but when it does, the patient no sooner
30 dies than the disease also ceases.

Faith teaches a different conception of evil. According to Jewish and Christian belief, reality neither is as homogeneously unified as Eastern religion suggests nor as ultimately divided as dualism maintains. Reality is God the creator and His creatures, a real multiplicity stemming from a single source. Evil is real, not merely apparent,
35 but it is not on a par with good. Rather, it is defect and disorder in creatures which, to the extent that they are not simply defect and disorder, remain good.

Scripture tells us of the universal goodness of creation as it came forth from the hand of God: "God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good" (Gn 1.31). This position is taken for granted throughout the New Testament, and it is explicitly
40 stated against opponents who maintained some form of dualism and who rejected marriage and certain foods: "Everything God created is good; nothing is to be rejected when it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by God's word and by prayer" (1 Tm 4.4-5). Things touched by evil can be redeemed, for their original goodness is not wholly destroyed, and the creative power of God can restore damaged goods.

45 God's work of creation and providential care is universal, effective, and confident. Thus He brings into being angels and human persons, who have so much reality and freedom of their own that they can introduce disruption into creation. This disruption is real, not merely apparent, yet it is not another entity, alongside the good things God made. Rather, evil is a privation. Thus the Church teaches "that there is no such
50 thing as a nature of evil, because every nature insofar as it is a nature is good" (DS 1333/706). In other words, there is no sort of thing which is evil, as there are sorts of things which are dogs, straight lines, loud noises, and so forth. Evil is a lack of something which ought to be, a gap in the fullness of something which remains good to the extent that it is the sort of thing it is.

55 Negative states of affairs are real, not merely apparent. The emptiness of one's gasoline tank, for example, is hardly an illusion. Yet this emptiness is not a "nature" on a par with a full tank of gas, as the air in the tank is a "nature" on a par with the gas which might be there. Not every negative state of affairs is evil, of course. The holes in one's sweater through which one puts one's torso, head, and arms are not defects. Evil is a negative state of affairs in which something is missing which ought to
60 be present. Thus evil is privation, for it deprives that on which it is parasitical of some part of the full reality it should enjoy.

This understanding of the reality and relative character of evil shapes the whole Jewish and Christian attitude toward sin and redemption. God neither ignores evil as if
65 it were illusory nor seeks to annihilate it as if it were a positive power opposed to Himself:

. . . you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook the sins of men that they may repent. For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned. And
70 how could a thing remain, unless you willed it; or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you? But you spare all things, because they are yours, O Lord and lover of souls, for your imperishable spirit is in all things! Therefore, you rebuke offenders little by little, warn them, and remind them of the sins they are committing, that they may abandon their wickedness and believe in you, O Lord!
75 (Wis 11.23-12.2).

Since evil is privation, the overcoming of it must be by restoring wholeness, by making good what is lacking. To try to segregate oneself from or to destroy what is evil is not to overcome evil.

80 Thus God saves by Jesus, in Whom He personally meets evil and by undergoing it draws what it has wounded back to the fullness of being the Father intended it to enjoy when He created it. The great hostility of the pharisees to Jesus is that they do not accept His strategy for salvation. Rather, they seek to keep clear of evil by strict observance of the law. They are scandalized by the conduct of Jesus as He mixes with sinners. They object to His claim of power to forgive sin (cf. Lk 5.17-6.11; Mt 12.22-45).

Jesus rejects the effort of the pharisees to identify evil with a certain class of things and instead holds that only immorality, which comes from the heart, defiles (cf. Mk 7.14-23).

5 Today no one holds the pharisaic concept of ritual purity. However, every effort to identify evil with some things as against other things, instead of identifying it with a defective and sinful attitude toward things, is a contemporary equivalent of the view of the pharisees. Every modern ideology which ignores the reality of sin and seeks to overcome evil by economic, technological, military, or some other kind of power implicitly conflicts with the Christian conception of evil as privation and of redemption as
10 restoration to wholeness.

B. Evils which raise further questions

15 The account of evil as privation and of the origin of evil in the sin of creatures raises many questions. Only a few of these can be treated here.

A first difficulty is that in many cases it hardly seems evil is merely incidental to something positive, as the privation theory requires. Often evil appears to have a positive character of its own. For example, if one is robbed, one undergoes a positive, bad experience. Again, if a child is born with a birth defect, the abnormal development
20 seems to be a positive state of affairs.

Being robbed is a bad experience. One characterizes the whole experience by what is defective in it. One does not pay attention to the fact that the robber is engaging in an intelligent, human action, or to the fact that one is able to have and is having an experience, or to many other aspects of the encounter which, to the extent that they
25 are real, are good. Without trying to settle the question of how one ought to act if one is being robbed, it is worth thinking about how one might act if one gave full attention to all the positive aspects of the situation.

The example of the abnormal development which is a positive state of affairs brings out another important point. A privation in a cause can lead to a positive state
30 of affairs in its effect which is other than the state of affairs which should obtain. The account of evil as privation does not mean that nothing is positively other than it would be if there were no evil. The abnormal development, to the extent that it involves some life and functioning, remains good. What is given is a more or less greatly diminished good, which can be called "evil" in a secondary sense, just to the extent
35 that its difference from the norm is a consequence of some privation in a cause.

Another difficulty concerns the origin of evil. Many things in nature seem to fall short of a norm without the intervention of any sin; indeed, it seems natural that evil occur. For example, one animal eats another, and every organism dies. Two points
40 must be made in response to this problem.

First, the determination of what ought to be, and so of what is evil, is relative to a norm, and the norm is relative to an orderly whole whose integral being is in question. If one considers disruptions in nature from the point of view of very limited
45 segments of the whole process--for example, from the point of view of a particular organism--then one will see as evil the inevitable interference of small systems with one another. Such relative evil does not have to be accounted for by reference to sin; in a sense it is natural, as is clear if one considers the whole process of nature as a unity.

Second, Scripture very strongly suggests that much of what we take as merely relative disruption, of the sort just described, has a mysterious relationship to sin. "God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living" (Wis 1.13).
50 "All creation groans and is in agony even until now" (Rom 8.22). Perhaps demonic forces have some responsibility for this (cf. 1 Cor 15.24-26). Of course, it is altogether possible for the same state of affairs to be determined both by natural causes and by sin; it will be a merely relative evil in the former relationship and something more significant in the latter. For example, people who grossly neglect care for their health die
55 both from natural causes and from sin.

Still another difficulty, and a very important one, concerns pain. Pain and the sensible pleasure which is in some way its opposite seem to be a pair of natural contraries, both of them positive; pain does not seem to be reducible to mere privation. Pain can be isolated as a definite state of consciousness; precisely as such and in itself
60 it seems to be evil. How can this example of evil be explained?

It seems to me that one must distinguish between sensible and intelligible good and evil. Felt pleasure and pain evoke strong emotional reactions and shape behavior, generally in a way which has survival value for the organism affected. As a positive
65 sensation, pain is real; however, pain is no less beneficial than pleasure to the organism. In other words, in general the experience of pain ought to occur; it is an intelligible good which belongs to a healthy organism as a necessary part of its self-defensive equipment.[2]

But this fact tends to become obscured for various reasons. In the first place, pain often is the experienced aspect of a relative, physical evil. Again, in many ways
70 pain can be closely related to moral evil. Then too, there is some tendency to consider every incentive to act good and every disincentive to act bad. Considered in this way, sensible and intelligible good and evil are not distinguished, and pain seems to be evil in the same way as, say, immorality is.

The phenomena of pleasure and pain together with our tendency to regard them as
75 prime examples of good and evil help to explain the two unsatisfactory conceptions of evil which I discussed in section A. One who notes that pleasure and pain in themselves are not intelligible good and evil is likely to generalize this insight, and so seek to reduce all evil to the level of mere appearance. One who notes that pleasure and pain are real opposites is likely to generalize this insight, and so to objectify evil itself
80 as a positive kind of entity. Both generalizations are erroneous. A painful sensation is part of reality, but its emotional repugnance is not an intelligible defect.

C. Hedonism unacceptable as a Christian account of human good

The preceding considerations help to make clear why Christian morality does not teach that one should live to enjoy as much pleasure and suffer as little pain as possible. St. Paul emphatically rejects this view, ascribing its appeal to disbelief in the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor 15.32-34). Yet it has so perennial an appeal that one must be quite clear about its unacceptability, in order to avoid it with complete consistency. Like so many other wrong positions, one can easily reject this one in principle yet inconsistently follow it in practice.

According to the explanation in the preceding section, pain is not an intelligible evil and pleasure is not an intelligible good. As I shall explain, both of them can be involved in intelligible human values, and then they share in the character of the good or evil in which they are involved. But considered in themselves, pleasure and pain motivate emotion and thus cause the spontaneous and unthinking reactions which sometimes follow upon emotion. These reactions as such do not provide any ground for the intelligent and deliberate action which expresses the personal capacity of a human individual.

If one takes pleasure and pain to be principles of human action, one's conception of action will be distorted. There is an intelligible aspect under which one can choose pleasure and seek to avoid pain, namely, the lessening of tension or increase in harmony among various parts of oneself. This good, especially in its conscious aspect, is peculiarly individualistic. Thus, emphasis upon pleasure and pain tend to focus concern upon oneself and to distract attention from the larger possibility of finding one's fulfillment by participation in community, ultimately in the heavenly community. For this reason, Christian moral guidance at the practical level stresses the importance of being ready to forego pleasure and endure pain, and insists on the wisdom of conditioning oneself to be able to do so.

Rational reflection confirms what Christian wisdom teaches. One can imagine the invention of a recording device which would create experiences somewhat like motion pictures, only communicate these directly to one's brain in order to make the experience and absorption total, thus to eliminate the awareness of oneself as spectator. Let us suppose that one could select whatever life-long program one wished, and consign oneself--or one's child or best friend--to such an existence. Would there be any point in doing so? The answer is obvious. No amount of guaranteed pleasure and avoidance of pain would make up for the fact that one would no longer be able really to live a life. Living is more than experience. It is real relationships, which mean involvement in a real world with other real persons. Human persons have these real relationships in and by acting.

Thus human goods are to be sought more in action as a whole than in mere conscious experience. The latter, of course, is generally a part of the former, except when one has experiences in an inactive, dreamlike condition. Experience of worthwhile action often includes an element of enjoyment. But this enjoyment is not always sensible pleasure. Joy is of many kinds, at least as many kinds as there are diverse sorts of intelligible goods for which one can act. Since this is so, the distinction of various forms of human good to which actions can be directed need not include pleasure and enjoyment as a distinct item. The enjoyment proper to each form of action will be included in its good as the conscious aspect of participation in it.

This clarification clears up two puzzles which often arise in thinking about heaven. It often is said that one will be happy in heaven and that this fact is a good reason for wishing to go there. If "happy" is taken to mean "filled with pleasure," then the motivation seems very individualistic and also quite limited. If "happiness" is understood in a more profound sense to mean fulfillment of all the aspects of the person by sharing many goods in fellowship, the individualism and limitation is overcome.

Again, the love of God above all things can seem a rather irrelevant, arbitrarily imposed demand if heavenly happiness is thought of as a purely subjective and conscious experience. But if this happiness is understood as one's sharing both in the life of God and in the utmost human fulfillment of which one is capable, then only the love of God above all things guarantees that one will not limit oneself in respect to what one might enjoy.

60 D. To be fully is to be good

Since evil must be considered a privation, goodness is fullness of being. Because God is infinite in being, He also is infinitely good; in Him there can be no lack (cf. DS 1333/706). God creates to express and share something of His incomprehensible perfection (cf. DS 3004-3005/1785-1786). While in God there can be no distinction between what He is and what He ought to be, each creature has a role in the order of things which it ought to fulfill. Its fulfillment and fullness of being will be that share in the expression of the divine goodness God intended for it in creating it. As I have explained, evil is privation of something of the fullness to which a creature is called. But what, positively, is this fullness? Clearly, it is not the boundless perfection of God Himself, for creatures are not evil merely by being the limited entities God has made them to be.

The fullness of being, the goodness of each creature, is that fullness of which it is capable, insofar as it is a creature of a certain sort, with certain capacities and opportunities to be and be more. A turtle is not defective inasmuch as it lacks the ability to run like a gazelle, nor is an ape defective because it lacks a sense of justice. Evil is not simply lack, it is privation--lack of what ought to be. Goodness is the fullness appropriate to each entity.

In a certain respect, each creature is good just by having the reality which makes it the kind of entity and the particular thing it is. But this fundamental goodness is not what is usually meant when we call something "good." Normally, a good x is an x which has a fullness which not every x has. "Good" commends some x in comparison with another x. This is the goodness we must try to understand.

Unlike God, creatures--at least the ones we shall be concerned with--have careers

in their reality. They do not exist all at once, but come to be gradually. They grow and develop. Initially they are not all which they can be. Thus, their fullness in being depends upon their realizing potentialities--that is, on their becoming what they can be.

5 The possibilities of actually existing things are not mere fictions. It is not a fiction to say that an infant can grow up to live an adult life. Its future adulthood has a reality rooted in the present existence of the infant. While not yet reached and realized, the potentiality of the infant is entirely real. Were this universally not so, there would be no future at all, since the future does not have the actuality of what
10 already is present.

Thus, goodness is in the fulfillment of potentialities. Yet not every fulfillment of potentialities is good. People who get sick and die, who make mistakes in reasoning, who burn the potatoes, and who hurt others are fulfilling potentialities just as truly as are people who live healthily, who think straight, who make good dinners, and who
15 help others. Various forms of evil are objectively possible, and the bringing about of privations as such is not good. Goodness is in that fulfillment of potentialities which leads to being and being more; by comparison, we consider bad that fulfillment of a potentiality which cuts off further possibilities and tends to restrict the realization which otherwise would be open to an entity. This point can be illustrated with examples
20 from various areas.

First, consider the bodily dimension of a person. An organism can function in a good or bad way; "health" and "sickness" mark this difference. How are they distinct? Both are ways of functioning; both fulfill some of the potentialities of one's body. But health describes a way of functioning which is compatible with and leads to function-
25 ing further and more fully, while disease is a way of functioning which interferes with and closes off further possible functions. Disease tends toward death--the cessation of all functioning. Health keeps possibilities of organic life open; the healthier one is, the more one as an organism is able to do. Thus the good of an organism (health) is to live and live more fully; what is bad (disease) is what diminishes possible fullness of
30 life.

A similar pattern exists in other dimensions of the person. In the field of thought and inquiry, we distinguish good and bad reasoning, as logic teaches us to do. Good reasoning requires clarity, consistency, certitude, and explanatory power. Bad reasoning is marked by confusion, inconsistency or looseness, inconclusiveness, and lack
35 of illuminating insight. When the former characteristics are present, understanding grows and expands, new areas for inquiry open up, and one continues to learn more and more. When reasoning has the latter characteristics, the processes by which we know are blocked and hampered. Thus in the field of thought and inquiry, as in that of bodily life, the good is that which makes possible further growth, while the bad is that which
40 blocks further growth.

The same pattern exists in the field of work and play, in art and technology. Creativity, efficiency, success, and the like are good because they fulfill possibilities and open up further possibilities. Dull conformism, wastefulness, and failure are bad because they lead to dead ends--they realize some restricted possibilities in ways which
45 unnecessarily limit further possibilities of human self-expression and achievement.

There remains one further dimension of human persons. A person is not called "good" or "bad" without qualification on the basis of bodily life or intellectual life or the life of outward activity. A person is said absolutely to be good or to be bad on the basis of the human acts and traits which make up his or her personal and interper-
50 sonal life. This is the domain of morality; it is called the "existential" dimension of persons. I shall explain in part three how the moral or existential domain is constituted by freedom of self-determination, and in part five how moral good and evil are distinguished.

For the present, it will be enough to notice that the moral challenge arises from
55 the multiplicity and distinctness of creator and creatures, self and others, and the various dimensions and capacities within oneself. One can act in ways which preserve and harmonize all this richness or in ways which are exclusive of some constituents and are disruptive of community and integrity. The former ways of acting point to more abundant life; the latter to a constricted existence. As in other domains, moral good-
60 ness is on the side of fulfillment; moral evil is a kind of existential suicide. In discussing hell in chapter four, section O, I already have said something about what "existential suicide" ultimately means.

65 E. Human goods -- our contribution to completion in Christ

In chapter four, section M, I explained that by the actions we undertake in this life we can contribute the good fruits of our nature and work to the fullness of Christ in which we hope to find our own fulfillment. I now wish to clarify more precisely what these goods are. In the present section and the next, I make some preliminary remarks
70 of a general sort; in sections G and H, I describe the various categories of human goods. They are going to be important principles of Christian morality, for they are aspects of the human fulfillment we are called to seek and to serve.

Frequently in Scripture God's promises include many blessings which are extrinsic to persons themselves: full warehouses, huge flocks, oxen loaded with goods, strong city
75 walls, and so on (cf. Ps 144.13-14; Dt 28.1-14). Such things are undoubted human goods, but they are not directly and in themselves fulfillments of persons. They are extrinsic things which persons can possess and use, but they do not guarantee personal fulfillment even in the bodily, intellectual, and cultural dimensions, much less in the existential or moral dimension. At present I am concerned not with such useful goods which are only
80 means to personal fulfillment; I am concerned with goods which are appealing and can be sought after on their own account, because they directly contribute to the fulfillment of persons.

Goods which are sought after on their own account are called "ends" to distinguish them from merely useful, instrumental goods which are called "means." John Dewey and

others have denied that there ever are final ends for human activity; they say that any good always is a means to some further good.[3] This view is not wrong to the extent that it focuses on the open and dynamic character of good, described in the previous section. Furthermore, goods which can be sought for their own sake also can be regarded as means to an ulterior purpose or, more importantly, as contributions to a larger whole, all the way to the largest whole which is the consummation of everything in Christ.

But the view that there are no final ends for human activity is confused to the extent that it breaks down the distinction between what persons are and what they have, between things constitutive of the fulfillment of persons and things merely instrumental to it. Moreover, there is the largest personal-interpersonal whole of the heavenly community whose life in no way is for the sake of anything ulterior; even if its creaturely perfection continues to grow forever and ever, this growth will in no way be a means to anything else.

As definite possibilities of the fulfillment of human persons, the goods we are concerned with have a real objectivity, even though they are not actual entities. Many subjectivistic and relativistic theories suggest that whatever one wants or chooses or whatever a particular group of people happen to care about is "good for them." As I shall explain in due course, the plurality and richness of human possibilities and the openness of human goods to development leaves a great deal of room for pluralism, diversity, and creative initiative. However, one will understand the objectivity of human goods if one understands what I explained in section D--that human goodness is the fullness of which human persons are capable, insofar as we are creatures of a certain sort, endowed with some definite capacities and opportunities for being and being more.

Although God had a choice whether to create human persons or not, even He could not make us what we are--which includes a definite set of possibilities--and then arbitrarily decide what sorts of things would be our goods. For instance, God cannot create an organism for which mortal illness is a good. Much less can individuals and groups determine what is "good for them"; what is good must be found, not settled, by us.

In thinking about this matter, people often are confused by the ambiguity of various expressions--for example, "decide." "Decide" means both judge and choose, and so one both must and cannot decide what is good. One must judge and one cannot choose that certain things fulfill human persons. If this and similar distinctions are overlooked, the truth that one must judge what is good misleads people into thinking that their choice makes what they choose to be good.

The objectivity of these human goods led some thinkers in the idealistic tradition --Nicolai Hartmann is a good example--to make an opposite mistake. They supposed that the goods, because they are objective, must enjoy an actual reality apart from and prior to human persons.[4] While it is true that all created goods preexist in the perfection and the wisdom of God, the goods we are at present concerned with are created realities considered in their own being. As created, human goods have no reality apart from the individuals and groups of persons in whom they can be and are realized, for these goods are nothing but the realizations of the possibilities of persons.

F. A preliminary indication of the goods

Vatican Council II teaches that the laity has a special role in the kingship of Christ. By His obedience He becomes the Lord of creation, subjecting everything to Himself. He passes this power on to His disciples so that they might both share in their own redemption and lead others to His kingdom:

For the Lord wishes to spread His kingdom by means of the laity also, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love, and peace. In this kingdom, creation itself will be delivered out of its slavery to corruption and into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God (cf. Rom 8.21). Clearly then a great promise and a great mandate are committed to the disciples: "For all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor 3.23).

The faithful, therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and value of all creation, and how to relate it to the praise of God. They must assist one another to live holier lives even in their daily occupations. In this way the world is permeated by the spirit of Christ and more effectively achieves its purpose in justice, charity, and peace. The laity have the principal role in the fulfillment of this purpose (LG 36).

This passage, closely related to the points considered in chapter four, sections L-N, refers to some of the principal human goods which I am about to identify: truth and life, justice, love, and peace. (I omit holiness and grace, for these are divine goods shared by human persons insofar as they participate in divine life, rather than properly human goods. The divine goods in which we are called to commune will be considered in chapter six.)

It should not be supposed that the Council--or the Preface for the Feast of Christ the King to which the Council refers--means to provide an analytic and exhaustive list of the goods of human persons. For our purposes, such a list is necessary. Also, because the Council is at pains to insist that the worldly goods of human persons, which are the proper concern of the laity, are intrinsic and not incidental to Christian life, it does not make clear that human friendship with God and human life--and all the other goods of human persons--are alike in being fulfillments of human persons to be pursued and protected in this life and contributed to fulfillment of Christ, in Whom they shall be found when we meet Him when He comes again.

When in chapter four I discussed the presence in heaven of human actions and goods, I admitted the mysteriousness of this teaching of Vatican II, but tried to clarify it. The analysis now provided of human goods adds to that clarification. Human goods are fulfillments of persons; if these goods were absent from heaven, persons would be deprived by reaching heaven of much of what they had come to be. These goods are not static possessions but are present in actions of various kinds. A body without functions is not an organism; a mind without processes of thought is in ignorance; a skill without expression is fruitless; a person without the acts and traits which constitute

personal and interpersonal life is embryonic. Since human persons will find fulfillment in heaven, their actions must endure.

To ignore this point is to miss something necessary if the Christian hope is to elicit human desire and enthusiasm; to deny it is to present a false forced option between Christian and human fulfillment.

One way to see what Scripture proposes concerning human goods is to notice the various forms of devastation which are described as consequent upon the sin of the first parents. God is depicted as giving the man an order: "You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die" (Gn 2.16-17). It is worth noticing that this "order" sounds more like a bit of good advice than like an arbitrary edict; from the outset, God is pictured more as a law-giver than as a law-maker. Be this as it may, the man and woman disobey, and so disrupt their harmony with God (cf. Gn 3.6).

The commission of the sin and its subsequent rationalization entail elements of self-deception and self-betrayal: "The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom" (Gn 3.6). The first point is wishful thinking, the second irrelevant, and the third an irresponsible belief. The serpent had lied (cf. Gn 3.4-5). When questioned, the man blames the woman--and God for giving her to him--and the woman the serpent (cf. Gn 3.12-13). There is some disruption of the harmony between man and woman in this account (cf. also Gn 3.16); a more radical interpersonal conflict is depicted when Cain's disturbed relationship with God leads to his killing Abel (cf. Gn 4.6-8). For this, Cain is exiled from God's presence (cf. Gn 4.16). The sin of the man and woman also immediately leads to their loss of innocence and thus to an uneasy self-consciousness: "they realized that they were naked" (Gn 3.7). The procreative and creative work of woman and man are transformed into painful and frustrating labor (cf. Gn 3.16-19). And from this labor there will be no rest: "Until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; For you are dirt, and to dirt you shall return" (Gn 3.19).

It seems to me that this model of human sin and its consequences makes clear that every aspect of a person is made worse by sin; every dimension of personal fulfillment is blocked. In their bodily reality, man and woman are doomed to die--the great good of life is forfeit. In their intellectual life they believe a lie, think crookedly, and engage in self-deception--the good of truth, of knowledge and truthfulness, is surrendered. As cooperators with God in the work of procreation and dominion over the earth they are condemned to labor--fruitfulness becomes a burden rather than a fulfillment. Moreover, in the existential domain, harmony is lost on all levels. There is the inner conflict, manifested by self-consciousness; there is discrepancy between one's capacity for intelligent action and the action done, which issues in self-deception and rationalization; there is interpersonal conflict, expressed in the shirking of responsibility, the hint of male-female tensions, and murder; and there is alienation from God, ultimately expressed in Cain's being sent away from Eden.

From the evils which mutilate them, one can infer that the human goods are life, truth, fulfilling work, and harmony on the various existential levels. I now consider these various kinds of goods in somewhat greater detail.

G. Human goods pertaining to the existential domain

All people experience tensions within themselves. The contemporary concern with getting-it-all-together points to the fact that people generally sense that they are not able to get it all together. Various aspects of the given self seem to be at odds with one another, and there is a need to struggle for inner harmony. The objective sought is the integration of the competing components of the self. This good is quite appropriately referred to as "self-integration" in its basic meaning of order within the self.

St. Paul refers to the relevant sort of conflict; he calls it a war between the law of the body's members and the law of the mind. Only Christ liberates one from this conflict (cf. Rom 7.15-25). Gifts such as chastity, mildness, patience, courage, and self-control are various aspects of this one existential good (cf. Gal 5.22-23). These aspects are distinguished by different areas of activity in which the well-integrated Christian functions in a characteristic way.

Tension also exists between the realistic insights of individuals and their actions. It is true that an action always is the act of a person who performs it, yet the action is something other than the actor. Conflict is possible here, and it is expressed in comments such as "I could kick myself for being such a fool as to have done that." The harmony which is disrupted by this sort of conflict can be called "integrity" or "practical reasonableness." A person who lacks this good is double-minded (cf. Jas 1.8) or a liar (cf. 1 Jn 2.4). This good is part of what is meant in Scripture by "wisdom" (cf. Prv 8.1-21).

Looking beyond the individual, it is obvious that we experience tensions in our relationships with others, and we also seek in many ways to overcome these tensions and to establish harmony between ourselves and other people. Peace, justice, and friendship between individuals and groups are various aspects of this good. For this reason, it is a dreadful thing to be cut off from one's people (cf. Gn 17.14; Ex 12.15; Lv 17.4). In Scripture, words such as "justice" and "peace" often are used in such a broad sense that they refer to all of the levels of existential fulfillment, and even to the whole of human well-being. However, there can be no doubt that interpersonal harmony, just cooperation, and fraternal communion are great goods of human persons, celebrated throughout Scripture and Christian tradition: "Behold, how good it is, and how pleasant, where brethren dwell at one!" (Ps 133.1; cf. Lv 26.5-6; Nm 6.26).

In the existential domain there is, finally, the level of harmony with which all religion is concerned: peace and friendship between humankind and God. Friendship with God is a primary blessing; an important aspect of this blessing is liberation from sin, because sin is separation from God (cf. Ps 51.12-14; Jer 33.6-9; Ez 36.25-31). We tend to think of friendship with God as something too elevated to list alongside other human

goods, and we tend to think of sin as if it were an injury to God rather than as deprivation of human fulfillment. And thinking this way, we tend to draw the conclusion that what we suffer as a consequence of sin is a gratuitous harm, arbitrarily imposed by God as punishment.

5 But although communing with God in Christ--which will be considered in chapter six --does go beyond a merely human good, human fulfillment also is sought and found in the human relationship of peace with God.[5] Sin does deprive the sinner of this fulfillment; separation from God is logically entailed by sin, not an arbitrarily imposed harm, as I explained in discussing hell in chapter four, section 0.

10 As the account of sin in Genesis already suggests, the various levels of human fulfillment in the existential domain are closely interrelated with one another. This fact partly explains the tendency to use expressions such as "peace" and "justice" in a wide sense to cover all or many aspects of these personal goods. The interrelationship can be understood more clearly by considering an example beginning, for instance, with a conflict between oneself and another person.

15 If one does an injustice to another, one satisfies some desire within oneself, but at the same time one makes oneself uneasy, since one is anxious about the reaction of the person who is harmed, and one stands to suffer some loss of respect and friendship. In other words, unjust people want what they unjustly take for themselves but they also want to be loved, and these two wants within themselves are set at odds by the unjust act. Moreover, the unjust person's action cannot be fully in harmony with honest insight; conscience is uneasy. And, of course, peace with God is disrupted by conflict among people who treat one another unjustly; they cannot think of Him as a common friend when they are at odds with one another. God will be drawn into the conflict and, as it were, compelled to take sides.

20 The same connections could be illustrated in greater detail and they hold no matter what the starting point. The various levels of existential fulfillment can be distinguished from one another, but in reality they are not separable. They all are realized and damaged together. We know this well by experience: for example, when we are angry with someone else we are troubled within ourselves, we do things we do not approve of, and we cannot pray with a good heart. The Scriptural teaching about the inseparability of love of God and neighbor emphasizes one important aspect of this same point (cf. 1 Jn 2.10; 3.12; 3.17; 4.18; 4.20).

35 H. Human goods pertaining to other domains

In the intellectual dimension, human fulfillment is in knowledge of truth, particularly in that truth which is sought for its own sake. This good considered from the point of view of the activity is knowing, and considered from the point of view of the perfective content is truth. Theoretical knowledge--truth sought for itself--is not limited to professional intellectuals such as philosophers and scientists. The curiosity of a child also is aimed at this good. Esthetic experiences, which are engaged in for their own sake, involve a great deal of sensory activity, but this activity is formed and given its peculiar value by the influence of intelligence. Thus, such activity also pertains to the fulfillment of human persons in the domain of intellect.

40 In Scripture, explicit mentions of truth and knowledge usually refer to the practical or existential fulfillment previously described, called "wisdom" (cf. Prv 3.13-18; Jb 28.12-28). However, the fulfillment of persons by theoretical truth and esthetic experience is not ignored, even if it is seldom explicitly discussed. It is implicitly recognized and commended in various contexts, including that of the praise of God the creator (cf. Ps 104). The beauty and order of God's universe is acknowledged and acclaimed with childlike wonder.

Vatican II explicitly commends work in philosophy, history, mathematics, and the sciences, as well as cultivation of the arts, because this effort "can do much to elevate the human family to a more sublime understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty, and to the formation of judgments which embody universal values" (GS 57).

In the field of external activity, one might suppose there is no good directly perfective of human persons, but only goods instrumental to properly personal fulfillment. But this supposition would be a mistake. Playful activities are engaged in for their own sake, and so are many forms of skillful performance which also are productive of fruitful results (cf. Prv 31.13-19; Ps 128.2).

60 An important aspect of human dignity is cooperation with the creative work of God (cf. Ps 8.7; Gn 1.28; Eccl 11.1-6). If work is not fulfilling, this situation arises not from any necessary irrelevance of external behavior to the fullness of personal being, but rather from the conditions which make work into labor (cf. Gn 2.17-19). Vatican II explicitly teaches that work is not merely instrumental and that human fulfillment demands culture, including external activity (cf. GS 53 and 67). Activities which are merely playful in a special way reflect the utter gratuity of God's creative act, for such activities express a person and seek to acquire nothing (cf. Prv 8.27-31).

70 The fulfillment of persons in their bodily dimension is acclaimed as a great blessing throughout the Bible. Creation is crowned by life and this good is specially blessed to insure its growth and continuance (cf. Gn 1.22, 28). In the covenant with Noah, there is a permission to kill animals, but an explicit protection of human life (Gn 9.1-7). The position that life is precious and death a great evil is strongly asserted in Wisdom (1-2). That life itself is a good is presupposed in all of the cases in which life is miraculously preserved or restored.

Vatican II clearly teaches that whatever is opposed to life itself or to bodily integrity is a great crime (cf. GS 27). Procreative fruitfulness, good health, and bodily integrity are aspects of the human good of life (cf. Gn 15.2; 21.6; 25.21; 30.1; Ps 127.3-4; 128.3-4; 144.12). The avoidance or treatment of pain, considered as an intelligible value, belongs to this same general category of human well-being.

80 It is worth noticing that while the existential goods and the goods in the other domains are not so tightly interrelated with each other as the existential goods are among themselves, still there are some important relationships. One ordinarily cannot

consistently pursue or protect goods such as life and truth without taking care to promote goods such as self-control and social justice; conversely, any attack upon a good such as life normally involves an attack upon a good of the existential kind as well.

Furthermore, goods which fulfill other dimensions of persons are necessary as
 5 vehicles when one is primarily interested in cultivating a good of the existential domain. One cannot carry on a friendly relationship without having some common interests and doing something together. Similarly, religious fulfillment cannot be pursued in isolation from activities in which one seeks to promote bodily well-being or skillful performance or thoughtful reflection. The harmony which existentially perfects individuals
 10 and groups of persons must be a harmony with some substance to it; one cannot make music without sound.

It also is worth noticing that while the goods of the existential domain can only be realized in properly human actions--one cannot have justice except in just deeds or dispositions to them--the goods of the other domains can be realized in two distinct
 15 ways. In one way, they simply come naturally; health, for instance, can be a blessing for which one has done nothing. It is present in such a case not in any peculiarly human action but in the activities or functions which occur naturally in one's body. In another way, these goods come about through choice and action. In this case, the one who acts finds fulfillment as the cause of good; the one in whom it is furthered (who
 20 might be the actor himself or herself) finds fulfillment as the recipient of the good.

I. How the human goods will be found in heavenly fulfillment

In chapter four, sections L-M, I already discussed to some extent how the human
 25 goods will be found in heaven. I wish here only to develop a little what I said there.

"Peace" is used in the Old Testament with a very rich meaning, yet its sense is not indefinite. It signifies utter fulfillment, completion, perfection, a condition of well-being and flourishing in which nothing is lacking.[6] The prophets foretell a
 30 Messiah who will be prince of peace (cf. Is 9.5-6). About to die, Jesus leaves His followers peace: "'Peace" is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you" (Jn 14.27). Newly risen, He repeatedly greets the disciples: "'Peace be with you'" (Jn 20.19, 21). The proclamation of the Gospel is of peace: "Christ's peace must reign in your hearts, since as members of the one body you have been called to that peace" (Col 3.15). God will answer every prayer of Christians, and so they have nothing to worry about: "Then
 35 God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding, will stand guard over your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4.7).

It is clear that this promise and hope of peace includes every aspect of human fulfillment. The sending of the Spirit at Pentecost begins to build up the new creation in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5.17; Eph 2.10): God has sent forth His Spirit and the face of the
 40 earth is renewed (cf. Ps 104.30). Thus, in the end, sin and all its effects will be overcome; the evils initiated at the beginning will be finally healed. God created a new heavens and a new earth, and from heaven sends to earth a new Jerusalem, which also is a new Eden (cf. Rv 21.1-4).

In heaven the relationship between God and His adopted children will be permanent and unbreakable. Those who share in this inheritance will be unable to lose it, for it is imperishable (cf. 1 Pt 1.3-4). With the exclusion of sin, every existential evil is excluded: "'This is God's dwelling among men. He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and he shall be their God who is always with them. He shall wipe away every
 45 tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away'" (Rv 21.3-4). War will be at an end (cf. Is 2.4). Like infants, the children of God will find comfort in His everlasting arms (cf. Is 66.11-14). The ultimate elimination of all conflict and disharmony, the permanent establishment of perfect harmony, is expressed poetically:

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with
 55 the kid;
 The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.
 The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest;
 the lion shall eat hay like the ox.
 60 The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.
 There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
 for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the
 sea (Is 11.6-9).

65 The whole richness of the many distinct aspects of creator and creatures, self and others, and dimensions of the self will be perfected in perfectly harmonious unity.

Even now, the Christian is blessed with a share in God's knowledge. The disciples of Jesus are His friends, not His servants, for He makes known to them everything He has heard from the Father (cf. Jn 15.15). The plan of God is now clear: "God has given us
 70 the wisdom to understand fully the mystery, the plan he was pleased to decree in Christ, to be carried out in the fullness of time: namely, to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ's headship" (Eph 1.9-10). Perfect knowledge will be given in heaven (cf. 1 Cor 13.9-12).

Jesus is the resurrection and the life (cf. Jn 11.25), come to give life and more
 75 abundant life (cf. Jn 10.10). The Christian is promised: "'He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day'" (Jn 6.54). And so in the heavenly Jerusalem "there shall be no more death" (Rv 21.4).

What Scripture teaches about human fulfillment in goods such as knowledge and life
 80 might lead us to suppose that these blessings are only passively received by the blessed, so that nothing they have done in the service of these goods in this life really contributes to their enjoyment of them in heaven. However, the teaching of Vatican II concerning the renewal of all the goods of our nature and fruits of our work precisely indicates that not only the existential goods but also these which pertain to other dimensions of the person contribute to completion in Christ by being participated in by

Christian actions here and now (cf. GS 39).

Clearly the conception of heavenly fellowship as an endless wedding banquet is very suitable. In a banquet, bodily life is enriched by plentiful food and drink; a wedding especially celebrates the prime and renewing of life. Music and dance, joyous performances done without labor, express skill. Practical business is set aside; conversation delights in the play of the mind and in sheer communication. The company is warm; tensions are banished. The hosts mingle with the guests; the home is open for hospitality. As St. Augustine says: "How great will be that happiness, where there will be no evil, where no good will remain hidden, where there will be leisure for the praises of God, who shall be all in all!" (FEF 1788).

"Who shall be all in all"--here one notices how consideration of human fulfillment is easily transposed into the more than human fulfillment of communing in the life of the divine Persons. The peace of heaven is not only the perfection of every level of human existence, including harmony with God, but even is participation in God's own inner harmony. The eternal life of heaven is not only immortal and perfected bodily existence, but is participation in divine life. The knowledge of heaven is not only perfection of human understanding, but is something more intimate: knowing as we are known.

Because every created good is a manifestation of God's uncreated perfection, human fulfillment naturally signifies the fullness of divine perfection. Because divine communion in itself must remain mysterious to us in this life, the language and the reality of human fulfillment must serve to communicate in faith the content of our hope for communion with God. And because the goods of human persons are open and expanding possibilities, love of divine goodness itself is not impossible for human hearts. In loving life and truth, justice, friendship, and peace, human persons can love every good fruit of human nature and work, and at the same time love in Himself God, whose fullness is so much more than any and all of the good fruits of human nature and work.

J. Is human life really an intrinsic good of the person?

Many today argue that human life is wrongly considered an intrinsic good of human persons, if by "life" one means mere survival, simple bodily existence.[7] This reality, they argue, is an important one, since it is a necessary condition for all other goods. But in itself life, understood in this strict way, is only an instrumental good. A full life, a life of real quality, is good--so the argument goes--but this goodness is from other intrinsic goods of the person which build upon the foundation of mere existence.

Scripture seems to give warrant for the view that abundant offspring and long life are worth nothing: If one does not have a good life, an aborted child is better off (Eccl 6.3). Many today obviously share this view. Jesus Himself says of His betrayer: "Better for him if he had never been born!" (Mt 26.24). This would seem to be true of the damned in general. What is the good of human life to a person in hell?

One reason why people think that life is not an intrinsic good of persons is that they think life is common to all living things. In a sense this is true, of course, but in a deeper sense it is false. Biological life is different in humans, in other animals, and in plants. This is a matter not of speculation but of biological fact.

Although animals can perform many of the kinds of functions performed by plants, animals perform their functions in a proper way. Animals assimilate food, grow, and reproduce, but they carry out these so-called vegetative functions in an animal way. To be able to do some of the things plants can do is not to be a plant; to be partly perfected by functions generically common to plants and animals is not to be partly a plant.

The same is true of humans. Persons can do many of the things which other animals can do and many of the things plants can do. But this does not mean a person is partly an animal or a plant. Even biologically, a human being is a specific kind of organism. To be one kind of thing, by definition, is not to be any other kind of thing. An individual of a certain kind is of that kind through and through. Human life, then, is properly human, for every aspect of it is specific to human persons. In reality there is no life in general; this is merely an abstract concept.

The proposition that life is only instrumentally good implies that the human person or some parts of the human person are one thing and that a person's living body is quite another thing. This implied position splits the person in two, and so it is called "dualism." (This is a different split, and so the word "dualism" is used here in a different sense, from the dualism of good and evil considered in section A.) Dualism is false.

The Christian doctrine of the resurrection points to the falsity of dualism. Resurrection life is bodily life. When Jesus was dead, He was not without divine life, but He did lack human, bodily life. As I have explained already, eternal life means much more than the good of human life, but the importance of bodily resurrection can only be grasped if one accepts the intrinsic goodness of human bodily life, and so its real necessity for ultimate completion in Christ. Paul makes absolutely clear how important resurrection is (cf. 1 Cor 15.13-26). At the same time, Paul himself seems to have envisioned the possibility of disembodied existence (cf. Phil 1.24; 2 Cor 5.2-10). The Church teaches the immortality of the soul (DS 1000/530; 1440/738). Therefore, one cannot say that the resurrection is important only because one could not conceive any manner of communing with God unless bodily life were given as a necessary condition. Rather, resurrection is so important because bodily life is an intrinsic good of human persons; their human fulfillment would be incomplete without it.

In chapter four, section H, I emphasized that one aspect of the unity of Christians with Christ is a real, bodily unity. The resurrection of Christians is to a radically new form of life, grounded in their unity with the risen Lord (cf. 1 Cor 15.20-49). As one shares natural life and death with Adam, one shares in the death and resurrection life of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15.20-23). "He who raised up the Lord Jesus will raise us up along with Jesus and place both us and you in his presence" (2 Cor 4.14). Indeed, even now the Christian already mysteriously shares in Christ's new life (cf. Col 3.1-4).

Now, if one firmly rejects dualism and takes seriously the Christian's bodily union with Christ, then the sanctity of human bodily life here and now is very clear.

The great concern in the Christian tradition about the sources of life and sexual activity which touches upon life's beginning also is obviously appropriate--beginning, for example, with Paul's argument against fornication (1 Cor 6.15-20). Moreover, the real effectiveness, not mere symbolic value, of the sacraments is clarified, for they are means of constituting and maintaining the resurrection life which one shares with Christ. However, if one is imbued with a dualistic view of the human person and considers bodily life a merely instrumental good, then all of these important matters are greatly obscured.

Rational reflection supports the truth of what faith teaches. First, the instrumental view of the good of human life implies dualism. As already explained, intrinsic human goods are not possessions of persons, but the fulfillment of their being. On the instrumental view of life, life is not part of the intrinsic good of persons. However, life certainly is not separable from the living body, as if it were a mere possession. Thus, on the instrumental view of the good of life, the living body will be one thing and the fulfilled person something else. Thus the instrumental view of the good of human life implies dualism.

Second, dualism is indefensible. Life is not merely one process among others, a process which can be distinguished from breathing, feeling, choosing, talking, and so on. The life of a person is indistinguishable from the person's very reality. Life must pervade every part and activity of a person, or something of the person would be unreal. Moreover, one's fulfillment is the completion of one's given self. If the personal goods which constitute fulfillment were something other than one's given self, then one could not fulfill oneself by acting.

Thus human bodily life is one of the constituents of human fulfillment. True enough, if a person suffers many evils, he or she can prefer--if it were possible--non-existence to suffering. Moreover, for the damned themselves, eternal privation of friendship with God and most aspects of human fulfillment no doubt make the blessing of life seem a permanent curse. Nevertheless, the continuation of life in itself, even in the damned, is a good. Were it not, God could not create it; because it is, annihilation of the damned is not a fitting solution to their tragic situation.[8]

If the dualist conception of the human person and the instrumentalist view of the good of bodily life is false, why do so many people think this way? The question is not easy to answer. Humankind in modern Western culture has developed a peculiar view of human persons, which are considered as incommunicable conscious subjects, encased in body objects which conceal them from one another rather than communicate them to one another.

In part, this peculiar view must be due to factors proper to modern Western culture--for example, the felt separation from nature experienced by persons who live in cities, work with inanimate objects, and deal constantly in artificial symbols. In part, however, sins against bodily life and sexuality lead to a distorted consciousness of one's self. For example, one can sin more comfortably in killing the unborn if one can separate human life from the person; similarly, one can abuse sexuality for gratification with less unease if one thinks of one's true self as the gratified consciousness and one's sexual organs as a lower form of life with its own dynamism. I believe that Scripture suggests this insight (cf. Wis 2.2-9).

K. How does one know that these are the goods?

Apart from indications in Scripture concerning what constitutes human fulfillment, how does one know that the things listed are the proper ones? Might there not be others which have been omitted?

The question about how one knows can be considered on two levels. On one level, the question is how anyone directly and practically knows that human life, for example, is good and death is bad. On another level, the question is a methodological one: How was the given list arrived at? How could it be checked?

As to the first question, practical insight into the various forms of human fulfillment is not derivable from any more general knowledge. One does not come to know these goods by deducing them from some prior principles. But neither is knowledge of these goods a matter of experience in the sense that knowing fire burns is a matter of experience. To know that fire burns is to understand something which is the case. To know that life is a good is to understand something of human possibility. Life is understood in practice as good only insofar as it is to be realized or is threatened and needs to be protected. How can one understand on the basis of experience what is not actual but only potential?

This question can be answered only if one realizes that human intelligence does not become practical merely by its subject matter, nor merely by being moved by will or inclination. Reason is practical by nature just as much as it is theoretical by nature. And just as theoretical thought by its very nature is thinking that-it-is, so practical thinking by its very nature is thinking that-it-would-be-well-to-be. Facing the world, one not only wonders, "What is the case?" but also, "What might I bring about?" Underlying this practical thought is a frame of mind which can be expressed: Good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided.[9]

With this practical presupposition in mind, people experience their tendencies and understand in them possibilities which could be satisfied by action. The tendencies, simply as psychic facts, are not themselves knowledge of human goods. Tendencies might move one to action, but they are no more reasons for acting than are any other facts. However, in the experience of tendencies, human understanding which is oriented toward possible action grasps the possible fulfillments to which the tendencies point. Thus one forms, naturally and without reflection, the normative truth: Such-and-such is a good.

A normative truth grasped in this way is so basic and so obvious that it is seldom stated expressly or considered by itself. People who become aware that food is becoming scarce think that they must try to assure their supply. Underlying this thought is awareness of a factual relationship--food is necessary for survival--and the normative

truth: Life is to be preserved.

Part of the process of gaining insight into goods depends upon the fact that some tendencies can be at least partly satisfied by nature and by the action of other persons. In experiencing a tendency and its satisfaction, one learns factual truths which provide a background for the practical insight. Thus, for instance, children are naturally curious and naturally grow in understanding as they ask and answer questions. Insight into this process provides a basis for the practical insight that knowledge is a good which can be pursued by one's own deliberate action. However, this insight cannot be derived from nonpractical awareness. Practical awareness is an irreducible starting point of self-actualization, which is a creative process of exploring and realizing one's own possibilities by one's own initiative.

To the extent that the understanding of basic forms of human goodness is a projection of possibilities implicit in one's naturally given tendencies, this understanding is stable and invariant. Thus the concept of truth as a good remains an invariant framework insofar as this normative insight corresponds to natural curiosity, for such curiosity does not change.

However, any experience of fulfillment in any basic form of goodness leads to some specification of interest. The child at first asks questions about everything, but later wonders only about certain subjects. Moreover, experience of fulfillment together with theoretical inquiry lead to more or less detailed practical sketches of the basic goods. Truth, for example, is articulated into a set of fields of study. The secondary parts of the understanding of the basic forms of human goodness can develop and vary, and they can include mistakes and thus be open to correction.

What is true of goods such as life and truth also is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the personal and interpersonal goods of the existential domain. The various levels of existential harmony are understood as good on the basis of human tendencies no less fundamental than the urges to survive, to play, and to understand. For everyone wants peace of mind, friends, and a favorable relationship with unseen Power. But differences in experience and in theoretical beliefs make a great difference in how people conceive these goods in specific detail. Christian faith proposes a very different worldview and style of life from that proposed by any form of paganism or secular humanism. Thus St. Paul teaches:

I declare and solemnly attest in the Lord that you must no longer live as the pagans do--their minds empty, their understanding darkened. They are estranged from a life in God because of their ignorance and resistance; without remorse they have abandoned themselves to lust and the indulgence of every sort of lewd conduct. That is not what you learned when you learned Christ! I am supposing, of course, that he has been preached and taught to you in accord with the truth that is in Jesus: namely, that you must lay aside your former way of life and the old self which deteriorates through illusion and desire, and acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking. You must put on that new man created in God's image, whose holiness and justice are born of truth (Eph 4.17-24).

In this passage, Paul points out an important factor which affects peoples' detailed, practical sketches of basic forms of human goodness: namely, sin and consequent rationalization. Paul's remarks can easily be adapted as a critique of the various forms of new morality widely propagated today.

The methodological question--how the list of basic forms of human goodness was arrived at and how it might be criticized--is easily answered. Since everyone acts for the sake of some good, and since goods which are not intrinsic to persons are sought as means to those which are, one need only observe the normative assumptions implicit in the practical reasoning of oneself, other people, and deliberative bodies debating possible lines of communal action. One can supplement this sort of analysis by directly asking questions: "Why are you doing this?" and pushing the line of inquiry until one comes to a normative principle which seems obvious. "Why work?" "To make money." "Why do you want money?" "You have to eat." "Why bother about eating?" "Don't be silly. You'll die if you don't."

The results of this sort of inquiry cannot be accepted uncritically. The raw material has to be examined and sifted. One answer which often is likely to appear is: "For fun." In section C, I gave reasons why this answer ought not to be taken at face value. In some cases, it merely indicates that one is acting for the good inherent in the action, not for some practical ulterior purpose. In other cases, it more particularly indicates that one is acting for a certain aspect--some experience--of the good of self-integration. One reduces tension, at least temporarily, by doing something one feels like doing.

Other responses to inquiry about purposes of acting also can be seen to indicate some part or aspect of one or several of the basic forms of goodness. One drinks because one is thirsty. The behavior sometimes is spontaneous and unthinking; thirst is a motive rather than a reason. But if one deliberately chooses actions which satisfy normal organic needs, one is acting for life, which includes health, safety, and so on. Again, a person acts out of patriotism. Patriotism is reducible to specific aspects of some of the existential goods; it presupposes a particular view of what constitutes a good community and personal integrity.

Very often extremely large concepts are put forward as ways of expressing human-kind's basic well-being. For example, someone might talk about acting in accord with reason, or living for self-realization, or acting out of love. Such notions work in one of three ways. Sometimes they summarize many or all of the basic forms of human goodness, as the biblical "peace" and the "happiness" of Greek philosophy do. Or a very broad concept can simply be a way of articulating the notion of good itself, as is the case with "self-realization" and "creative growth toward fulfillment." Or, finally, a large concept can express a certain view about how human fulfillment is best pursued and most likely realized. "Love" often works this way, and it is given very different practical contents by different theories in which it plays a part.

L. Brief notes on some questions to be treated later

What I have said in this chapter about the basic forms of human goodness both raises and helps suggest answers to several important questions which will be treated in later parts of this work. Here I wish only to indicate these matters briefly.

First, it often is suggested today that human nature changes. If so, appropriate actions in one time and place no longer would be appropriate in another. Moral truths would be transient. How does the account of human goods articulated here help to deal with this question?

One point to notice is that the basic forms of good open up the possibilities which make for all sorts of cultural solutions under varying historical conditions. But one does not find a human culture in which death is considered good and life bad, or one in which conflict within the group is regarded as humanly fulfilling. The problems are the same basically for people always and everywhere.[10] The beliefs about what will help solve them are different. More or less extensive and accurate insight into human possibilities is developed in some places and times than is developed in others.

From the perspective of Christian faith, the effect of sin cannot be overlooked. Humankind is incapable without the light of divine revelation of consistently grasping and accurately following out the implications of what truly is humanly good. Very often, whole societies settle for solutions which mutilate human nature. This mutilation is a kind of change, but not one which sets new and better standards.

At the same time, the open-endedness of human goods, their multiplicity, and the extremely varied opportunities provided by diverse natural and cultural environments for participating in them do make for a great deal of variety and invite a creative approach to human life.[11] Human nature can be changed for better or for worse--this is a fundamental assumption of Christian morality with its awareness of the impact of sin and grace.

But the human nature which changes in its various conditions is not the standard of human fulfillment. Rather, the standard is the basic possibilities of human individuals as bodily creatures, endowed with intelligence, able to engage in fruitful work and creative play, psychically complex, capable of more or less completely reasonable action, in need of companionship, capable of love, and open to God in Whose image they are made. If these possibilities in their basic givenness are what is meant by "human nature," then human nature does not change. Indeed, when "nature" is understood in this sense, the very notion that human nature could change is logically absurd.

A second point concerns the matter of a hierarchy of goods. What I have said in this chapter indicates that there are several distinct human goods. These have not been organized into any definite system. Is there an objective hierarchy of values or not?

There certainly is a hierarchy of values in one sense: Sentient satisfactions as such are not human goods. They are valuable only insofar as they contribute to some aspect of intelligible human fulfillment. Moreover, extrinsic and merely instrumental goods, such as money, are not in themselves fulfillments of the human person. They can be means; it is worth noticing that they also can be obstacles.

There is a second sense in which one can correctly say there is a hierarchy of values which has objectivity: namely, what is morally good is superior to what is morally bad. Very often when people talk about a proper scale of values, they mean that one ought not to act for goods in immoral ways, but ought rather to prefer moral uprightness even when it requires that one give up something, perhaps even forego something which would be genuinely fulfilling. Analogous to this is the ranking of things which the Christian led by the Spirit carries out, even within the field of what is morally acceptable. For example, according to a Christian sense of values, celibacy or virginity for the Lord is better than marriage (cf. LG 42).

Moreover, within the perspective of faith--since faith itself is an act which fulfills human persons by developing their relationship with God--the religious level of the existential domain is most important. Nothing is more important for the Christian than to be in unity with the love of God which comes to us in our Lord Jesus (cf. Rom 8.35-39). Put negatively, nothing is more important than the avoidance of mortal sin (cf. Mk 8.36).

However, there are two senses in which there is not a hierarchy among the basic human goods. In the first place, they are all essential and closely related aspects of human fulfillment. Faith does not diminish any of them. All of them have a place in human fulfillment in heaven; moreover, communion with Goodness Itself, which transcends human fulfillment, is inadequately expressed in all of these goods. In the second place, when it comes to making choices, there is no objective standard by which one can say that any of the basic human goods is definitely a greater good than another. For example, one cannot say it is measurably better to go to Mass than to study or get some necessary rest. What one ought to do, as we shall see, cannot be settled by weighing off the goods.

A final question concerns three important philosophical theories of human fulfillment. According to Aristotle, it is to be found in the fullest, consistent exercise of intelligence, since intelligence is what distinguishes human persons from everything else. According to Nietzsche and others, it is to be found in disregarding every convention and restraint, and living as creative and nonconformist a life as one can. According to many modern political ideologies, including both Marxism and Western liberal democracy, it is in satisfying all human basic needs and then leaving people at liberty to do as they please. How are these views of human fulfillment to be evaluated by the conception of basic human goods articulated in the present chapter?

One point to notice is that their appeal can be accounted for. The exercise of intelligence is related to at least two of the basic human goods: namely, truth and practical wisdom. Creative work also is a human good, and all the human goods, in their open-endedness, call for a creative approach to life. The satisfaction of basic needs is a service to the good of life and is likely to be of service to human fulfillment in its other aspects. The assumption of those who idealize liberty and who wish to create the conditions for its uninhibited exercise is that in the right situation people will

use liberty to fulfill themselves individually and communally in all the basic goods.

Yet all three of these approaches fall short. None of them takes into account the whole variety and richness of human fulfillment. As I will explain later, human freedom of self-determination is essential to all of the existential goods; the three approaches ignore or deny this freedom, and so they misconceive and oversimplify the personal and interpersonal, moral dimension of humankind. Finally, none of these three approaches has a conception of human fulfillment which really fits the requirements of faith. Just as the Incarnation did not annul the human nature of Jesus but perfected it (cf. GS 22), so sharing in divine perfection cannot annul human fulfillment for us. But if one attempts to reconcile the Christian vocation with any of the three approaches, either the attempt will be blocked at once or it will lead to a theology which cannot help one to live Christian life here and now as a contribution to heavenly fulfillment.

Notes to chapter five

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1. An excellent theological treatment of evil is: Charles Journet, The Meaning of Evil (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1963).

2. Roger Trigg, Pain and Emotion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 166, describes the case of a young woman who did not enjoy a normal sense of pain: "As a result she suffered considerable physical damage regularly, and it merely went unnoticed or was regarded with indifference."

3. John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1922), pp. 210-277.

4. Nicolai Hartmann, Ethics, vol. 1, trans. Stanton Coit (London and New York: George Allen & Unwin and Humanities Press, 1932), pp. 183-244.

5. See Mariasusai Dhavamony, Phenomenology of Religion (Roma: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1973), 291-316, for evidence from comparative religion in support of this point.

6. See John L. McKenzie, S.J., Dictionary of the Bible (New York and London: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 651-652.

7. The topic of the present section is dealt with in two works, with additional references: Germain Grisez and Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., Life and Death with Liberty and Justice: A Contribution to the Euthanasia Debate (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 372-380; Germain Grisez, "Dualism and the New Morality," Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel Suo Settimo Centenario, vol. 5, L'Agire Morale (Napoli: Edizioni Domenicane Italiane, 1977), pp. 323-330.

8. See St. Thomas, De potentia, qu. 5, art. 4, ad 6. See also E. J. Fortman, S.J., Everlasting Life After Death (New York: Alba House, 1976), pp. 158-170.

9. See Germain Grisez, "The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the Summa theologiae, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2," Natural Law Forum, 10 (1965), pp. 168-201.

10. See Alexander MacBeath, Experiments in Living: A Study of the Nature and Foundations of Ethics or Morals in the Light of Recent Work in Social Anthropology (London: Macmillan, 1953); Morris Ginsberg, On the Diversity of Morals (London: Mercury Books, 1962), pp. 130-148; Robert H. Lowie, An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, new and enlarged ed. (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1940).

11. In this sense, cultural evolution is as essential and constant as any of the other unchanging aspects of human nature. See David Bidney, Theoretical Anthropology (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 120-124 and the following chapters; A. Irving Hallowell, "Self, Society, and Culture in Phylogenetic Perspective," Evolution after Darwin, vol. 2, The Evolution of Man, Sol Tax, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 309-371; Charles Fay, "Human Evolution: A Challenge to Thomistic Ethics," International Philosophical Quarterly, 2 (1962), 50-80. I do not always agree with Fay's treatment, although I find his work very helpful. In particular, he seems (pp. 63-64) to view the underlying constant factors as universals; in one sense, this is true: They hold for all humankind. But they also are concrete realities of the order of potentiality. The potentialities which are the same are no more abstract entities than the acts which vary and develop.

60 Questions for study and review

1. Explain the privation theory of evil. Show how it is related to the Judeo-Christian doctrine of creation and the Christian doctrine of redemption.

2. In what sense is pleasure good and in what sense is it not a human good?

3. What is hedonism? How can this theory be shown to be false? What are the bad effects of thinking of heaven as the ultimate hedonic experience?

4. Summarize the general clarification of "good" presented in section D and show how this account of good differs from alternative theories of value (section E).

5. Which are the basic human goods? What evidence is there in Scripture and in the Church's teaching that these are basic human goods. (I would especially appreciate students' efforts to find and supply additional witnesses for the basic goods.)

6. How are the various basic human goods related to one another?

7. Summarize the case for the position that heaven will include fulfillment in all of the basic human goods.

8. Show that human life is an intrinsic--not merely instrumental--good of human persons. Why is this point of practical importance?

9. In what respect are the basic human goods fixed and unalterable? In what way are they open-ended?

10. Do you begin to see how there can be fixed moral norms without any rigid exclusion of human development and cultural evolution? Try to formulate an initial, tentative response to the common, popular argument: "Times have changed, and so the traditional moral teaching of the Church on x, y, and z must change too!"