

April 15, 2021

Good Morning All,

SJCCS Men's Club meeting tonight at 6:30 PM in Fr. Friend Hall. We will be using appropriate "social distancing" during the meeting. Come and participate - working together we can do great things!

One Week from today, Thursday, April 22nd, Jan Heithaus will be hosting the Catholic Book Club (3:00 or 6:30) This month's selection is: *The Q&A Guide to Mental Prayer* by



Connie Rossini. Still time to read!

1. Today's Readings: [Thursday of the Second Week of Easter | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Our first daughter virtue of justice is commutative justice. It regulates those actions which involve the rights between one individual and another individual. If a person steals another's money, he or she violates commutative justice. Any violation of commutative justice imposes on the guilty party the duty of restitution, that is, the duty of repairing the harm caused. In fact, strictly speaking, only violations of commutative justice give rise to this duty of restitution.

3. Quotes of the Day:

~ "To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity." *Pope Benedict XVI*

~ "Your deeds may be the only sermon some persons hear today." *St. Francis of Assisi*

Remember to follow God's laws with each other!

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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The Virtue of Justice: Commutative Justice

Those who are just give others what is due to them. When individuals do this for one another, it is called commutative justice (commutative means “reciprocal”). When individuals do this for communities, and vice versa, it is called social justice (or distributive justice). At this time, let us look more closely at commutative justice. Herein, we are concerned primarily with two kinds of cases: first, with those involving injury to persons or their property; and second, those dealing with contracts or covenants between persons.

Injuries

When injustice against a person occurs, injury inevitably follows, because the rights of that person have been violated. The most serious injustices against persons include murder, abortion, suicide and euthanasia. These injustices are always intrinsically evil (they can never be considered morally good), and they do irreparable harm.

Some may argue that suicide is not as unjust as murder because the only person harmed is the one who kills himself. Among those making this argument are members of the Hemlock Society that fight for the right to suicide, claiming that it is a compassionate thing to do, motivated by a desire not to be a burden on others. But suicide is an injury to oneself, for whom each one has responsibility; it is also an injury to one’s family and friends who are frequently left with terrible guilt and sorrow; and it is always an offense against God and His dominion over our lives. As the Book of Wisdom says (16:13-14), “For you have dominion over life and death; you lead down to the gates of the nether world and lead back. Man, however, slays in his malice.”

Many who commit suicide, however, may not be acting with clear minds and full freedom due to some mental instability; in these cases, the moral culpability is greatly reduced, even though the action itself remains morally wrong. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches this very thing, i.e. that suicide is gravely evil (Cf. #2281), but also that (#2283), *“Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear or hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide. We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons*

who have taken their own lives. By ways known to Him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance."

Spiritual Injuries

Injury to others can take the form of injury to their property since human beings necessarily live in a physical and material world. The Seventh Commandment deals with this injustice (Ex 20:15), "Thou shalt not steal." Injury can also take the more personal form of harming another's reputation through rash judgment, slander, detraction or calumny. Such sins of the tongue are strongly condemned throughout the Sacred Scriptures, none more colorfully than in the Epistle of St. James (Cf. 3:2-12). Spiritual injuries, such as these, can cause greater damage than physical ones.

Similarly, Jesus warns against the spiritual harm caused by those who subvert the faith of others. For example, He says (Mt 18:6), "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Whoever obstructs the faith of "the little ones," whoever hinders their trust in Him, can expect swift and just punishment. Our first pope, St. Peter, issues a similar warning in his Second Epistle (2 Pt 2:1), "There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who ransomed them, bringing swift destruction on themselves."

Propagating heresy or division among the faithful, while not frequently condemned in our day, remains a serious sin of injustice. Scandals like this are roundly condemned by Jesus (Cf. Mt 18:6-9). The long tradition of the Church has always held that injury to the soul is more dangerous than injury to the body.

Contracts and Covenants

Commutative justice includes a second kind of cases, those involving just recompense or compensation, usually spelled out in covenants and contracts. Here we move into the whole realm of just wages, fair pricing, advertising practices, loans, investments, and other aspects of business ethics. In the past century, more than at any other time in history, much debate has occurred in the Church and

society regarding these important questions. The Church has actively supported concepts such as a “fair wage,” a “family wage” and a “living wage,” and has spoken out frequently for the rights of workers to collective bargaining.

While these issues of contracts and covenants deserve lengthy consideration, I shall have to leave that to another time and place. One issue that I cannot pass over, however, is that of restitution. In all cases of commutative justice, there is an obligation to strict restitution whenever rights have been violated or when a contract has been legitimately made.

Restitution is described by St. Thomas Aquinas in this way (*Summa Theologiae*, II, II, q. 62, 1), “*It is seemingly the same as once more to re-instate a person in the possession or dominion of his thing.*” One returns or restores to the other his property, or one repairs whatever injury one caused. Of course, the second part of the above is much more difficult than the first, namely, to repair what has been injured, especially if the injury is of a spiritual nature or if the injury entailed the taking of another’s life. How can restitution be made in these cases? At times, it cannot be done.

In this world marred by original sin, some injustices cannot be set right by human effort. That is why we need a Redeemer, a Savior, who restores what we human beings cannot restore. At the same time, commutative justice requires that we make exact restitution to others as far as we are able. Making no excuses for whatever evil we have done, we must do all in our power to set things right. Whatever goes beyond our power, we humbly entrust to the mercy of God.

Source: catholicculture.org by Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted