

# Theory 5

# JUSTICE

## Justice

CCC1807 Justice consists in the constant and firm will (choice) to give God and neighbor their due; what we owe them.

Justice is the ability to give God and others

- what is due to them
- what we owe them
- what they have a right to
  - Justice is to have care and concern for the needs of others

### To Whom Do I Owe Something?

1. Those who have given us something
2. Those who have not given something
3. Those in which we have created a position of dependence

#### 1. To those who have given us something, we owe them something in return:

- |                       |                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| • God                 | 1-3 Commandments             |
| • Parents             | 4 <sup>th</sup> Commandments |
| • Spouse              | 6 <sup>th</sup> Commandments |
| • Church              | Precepts of the Church       |
| • Employer            | Job well done                |
| • Professors/teachers | Attendance + work community  |
| • Country             | Taxes/Participation/voting   |

#### 2. To those who have not given us anything,

- We owe it not to deny, deprive, or take away that which they have a right to
- Inalienable Rights (Pacem in Terris)
- However, I don't owe it to them out of justice.
  - i. I don't owe you a house, or an education or a job or food or healthcare...
  - ii. Christians are called to go past justice to mercy and give to others more than we owe them – to give what is rightfully ours.

#### Commandments

- 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not murder.

- The right to life
- 6<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Commandments: You shall not commit adultery, and you shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
  - Before engaging in sexual activity, our partner has a right to our full personal commitment, which can only take place through marriage.
- 7<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Commandments: You shall not steal, and you shall not covet your neighbors' goods.
  - The right to private property.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment: You shall not bear false witness
  - The right to a good name, a good reputation.
  - Gossip or slander is the violation of that right.

**3. To those in which we have created a position of dependence and need such as:**

- A child
- An employee

## Justice and Entitlements

**Justice** is the virtue whereby we give others what we owe them.

To live justly we must understand two principles:

1. Subsidiarity
2. Solidarity

The three errors that must be avoided:

- Collectivism – otherwise known as socialism, communism or a welfare state
- Individualism, selfishness and laissez faire capitalism
- An attitude of entitlement, irresponsibility

### **Collectivism**

- The practice of giving a group priority over each individual in it.
- Special interest groups are a breakdown of the idea of the common good.
  - I begin to lose my identity in favor of my political or special interest group.

## **Individualism**

- Seeking what is good for me and those who hold my selfish pursuits in common despite attacking the overall good necessary for everyone else.
  - Prone to corruption as money begins to dominate
  - Upsets the balance of the social order
  - Attacks the very idea of common goals, a common nature, and a common end, which is supernatural, not merely natural.

## **Entitlement attitude**

- The belief that one is inherently deserving of privileges or special treatment.
  - I don't have to take responsibility for myself or for others.
  - I'm owed special treatment when nothing has been done to deserve that

**Subsidiarity and Solidarity protect us against collectivism, communism, socialism and a welfare state, and discourage individualism and entitlement.**

### **1. Subsidiarity:**

Subsidiarity is the principle by which we take personal responsibility and make a specific contribution to the common good. Subsidiarity safeguards the good of the individual.

God created each person in His image with intelligence and a free-will. As a society, business, parish, or family, we should foster conditions in which individuals or small groups can express their distinct character and make their distinct contribution (cf. CCC 1894).

### **2. Solidarity:**

Solidarity is the principle that demands we take care of one another. In this way it safeguards the good of friendship and community.

Solidarity recognizes we are all in this together and we are responsible for one another; we are our brothers' keepers.

We need one another and help one another by sharing our material and spiritual gifts through generosity, mercy, and forgiveness. This giving and receiving creates friendship and joy (cf. CCC 1936,1937).

Jesus said to St. Catherine of Siena:

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I have given many gifts and graces, both natural and spiritual, with such diversity that I have not given everything to one single person, so that you may be constrained to practice charity toward one another...

I have willed that one should need another and that all should be my ministers in distributing the graces and gifts they have received from me.

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The government is there to provide limits to freedom, step in when the limit of right and wrong is crossed and the individual or common good is harmed. But the government should not take over and do what individuals, families, or small businesses could do, thus destroying their freedom, initiative, creativity, and responsibility (cf. CCC 2424, 2425).

Though we are responsible for one another we must not take over; we must not take away a person's freedom, initiative, creativity and responsibility because they need to employ these to mature and reach their full potential as a person.

As human beings, there are certain things that only individuals can do – that the collective cannot do.

If a person or can fulfill his/her responsibilities and role without you intervening, then don't intervene, let them do it on their own so they can mature and reach their potential.

Collectivism, communism, socialism and a welfare state are established in such a way that the government *does* intervene (cf. CCC 1883, 1885, 2425).

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Justice consists in the firm and constant will to give God and neighbor their due (CCC 1836).

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# Common Good

The common good is the social condition that allows people to reach their fulfillment (CCC 1906).

The common good consists in three elements:

1. Respect for the person (CCC 1907).
2. Social well-being and respect for the group itself (CCC 1908).
3. The stability and security of a just social order, what we refer to as “peace.” (CCC 1909).

1912 “The common good is always oriented towards the progress of persons: ‘The order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around.’ This order is founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love.”

Thus, any ideology that denies or destroys human dignity in order to create a more just *system* is not a just worldview, no matter what claims to justify themselves are offered to the contrary.

# Relationship between Justice and Mercy

The relationship between justice and mercy. Justice and mercy are distinct, yet they are linked in a very profound way.

<b>Justice</b>	<b>Mercy</b>
Justice is to give to others what we owe them.	Mercy is to give to others more than what we owe them.
Justice gives to others what is rightfully theirs.	Mercy gives to others what is rightfully ours.