

Moral Anthropology and Human Development¹

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Introduction²

The relationship of Science and Religion has not been a topic of central concern to Catholic Moral Theologians in the past several decades. Moral theologians have focused on the renewal of moral theology called for at the Second Vatican Council [1962-65] and with related issues of moral methodology. The findings of science have come into the practical discussion of particular moral issues, especially medical-moral issues, but the focus of most moral theologians has been elsewhere.

The purpose of this short paper will be to review some of the literature and to offer a few suggestions for further reflection on the relationship of science and moral theology. I discuss three major authors in particular. I begin with some references to the work of Josef Pieper, the distinguished philosopher and interpreter of St Thomas Aquinas. I continue with a discussion of the detailed and important work of Stephen J. Pope--*Human Evolution and Christian Ethics*.³ Pope offers a thorough and critical study. I then examine, quite briefly, Brendan Purcell's significant work *From Big Bang to Big Mystery: Human Origins in the Light of Creation and Evolution*.⁴ Purcell offers a wide-ranging synthesis of science and religion.

In beginning, I should note that I follow the interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas by Josef Pieper on the understanding of reason and of truth. Aquinas defines the virtue of prudence as "reason perfected in the cognition of truth." In discussing this definition, Pieper explains:

"Reason" means to him [St. Thomas] nothing other than "regard for and openness to reality," and "acceptance of reality." And "truth" is to him nothing other than the unveiling and revelation of reality, of both natural and supernatural reality. Reason "perfected in the cognition of truth" is therefore the receptivity of the human spirit, to which the revelation of reality, both natural and supernatural reality, has given substance.⁵

Thus prudence is not defined as 'getting my way' or 'cunning' as it is so often these days, but rather as a reasonable openness to reality. The reasonable person knows reality as it is capable of being known. Thus some aspects of reality can be known scientifically and others through different means—the literary analysis and appreciation of a poem for instance.

¹The thoughts expressed in this article are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect any position of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops regarding the matters discussed herein.

² I wish to thank all those who commented on earlier versions of this paper, especially members of the Washington Theological Consortium's Science and Religion Group.

³ Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

⁴ Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012.

⁵ Josef, Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 9.

The prudent or wise person is open to the truth of reality wherever this may lead. Thus the moral theologian will eventually need to incorporate the ‘truth’ of science into his/her thinking about morality. This will only be accomplished, I would add, after a review of the data of science as accepted in the field and as critiqued by other scientists.⁶

In beginning I would also note that I am a Catholic and would seek to integrate the scientific data into the best of Catholic moral thinking. My frame of reference is Catholic belief. At our best, we who practice Catholic theology seek to accept the truth of things. This stand may occasionally cause us to revise our ways of thinking about the human person, about her/his moral formation or about moral issues.⁷

Josef Pieper learned from Romano Guardini “...that the great German Poet [Goethe] and Aquinas both taught that reality—which is by its very nature true—is the measure of human thought and action.”⁸ The good human moral action is rooted then in the silent contemplation of truth of things—including I would say the scientific truth—that makes for prudent judgment of what to do and not to do.

Ilia Delio noted recently, “There is a widespread sense today that science and religion have nothing in common or *should* have nothing in common since they are entirely different disciplines.”⁹ We are arguing in this Conference for integration as far as it might be possible. Just as theology benefited from the integration of Aristotelian philosophy by Aquinas and others, we too are called to integrate the truth of modern science into our thinking. Truth is one.

Furthermore, science is not a self-explanatory system. There is need for further reflection that addresses deeper questions of human meaning.¹⁰ Going ever further, we might say, with Pieper, “that the real cannot be enclosed within any system of thought whatsoever, because it continually opens up toward something more that goes beyond it, arriving again and again at the frontier of the mysterious.”¹¹ Thus while we can know a great deal, there are limits to our knowing.

⁶ See my *What are they saying about virtue?* (New York: Paulist, 1985), 54-58 for my thoughts on the critical integration of moral theology and psychology. Some of these insights on social science are applicable here. I believe that one should be cautious but not exclusive in integrating the findings of one discipline into another.

⁷ See International Theological Commission, “Theology Today: Perspectives, Principles and Criteria,” *Origins* 41/40 (March 15, 2012) especially #46, ## 80-85.

⁸ Bernard N. Schumacher, “A Cosmopolitan Hermit: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Josef Pieper,” in *A Cosmopolitan Hermit: Modernity and Tradition in the Philosophy of Josef Pieper* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009) 5

⁹ Ilia Delio, OSF, “Bridging the Gap Between Science and Religion,” *Woodstock Report* (February 2012): 1.

¹⁰ Delio, 5.

¹¹ Schumacher, 6.

With this point we touch on the roots of Catholic morality in the spiritual life. The relationship of spirituality to morality is a topic of great interest in moral theology today.¹² In particular, I would say with St. Francis de Sales and many others that leading the spiritual life is leading the life of virtue.¹³

Josef Pieper preceded the current revival of virtue ethics by several decades. Yet he shares some of the same concerns. He desired to move away from the Kantian ethics of duty, from utilitarianism, and from the excessive casuistry of the Catholic neo-scholastics prior to the Second Vatican Council.¹⁴ He wanted to offer an updated virtue-ethics which focused on the good of the human person. For him the person is not self-sufficient, autonomous or free of natural inclination to the good.

Already during the 1950's Pieper had developed a philosophical anthropology—inspired by Thomas Aquinas, Erich Przywara, and Martin Heidegger, and anticipating the *homo viator* of Gabriel Marcel—of the free human being “on the way” to the actualization of his potential for being, pointed toward his total fulfillment by means of the practice of virtue. The latter constitutes the ultimate perfection of that capacity, or better, the maximum of what a person *can* be by his nature, leading him to the utmost of his own potential for being. This anthropology presupposes an ontology of *not-yet-being* accompanied by an eschatological dimension that expresses the internal structure of human nature, which tend toward a future that is yet to come, a future in which possibilities will be realized.¹⁵

Thus Pieper anticipated the current revival of virtue ethics and its concern with the formation of the character of the Christian oriented to the future as we see in numerous contemporary works of moral theology.¹⁶

Human Evolution and Christian Ethics

Stephen J. Pope in his important book *Human Evolution and Ethics* presents a very detailed exploration of evolution and ethics. He believes that scientists have nothing to learn from theologians in their scientific work *per se*. However,

Christian ethicists can play a valuable role in disentangling evolutionary science from its ideological misuses, pointing out the shortcomings of distorted applications of evolutionary theory to various kinds of human behavior, and showing that moral and religious implications of evolutionary accounts of humanity can be interpreted nonreductionistically.¹⁷

¹² See for example Dennis J. Billy, CSsR, *Contemplative Ethics: An Introduction* (New York: Paulist, 2011) and Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

¹³ *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. and ed. by John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday Image, 2003), Part III.

¹⁴ Schumacher, 10

¹⁵ Schumacher, 11.

¹⁶ See *The Hauerwas Reader*, John Berkman and Michael Cartwright, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Thomas S. Hibbs, “Josef Pieper and the Ethics of Virtue” in *A Cosmopolitan Hermit*, pp. 116-140; and Joseph Kotva, *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1996).

¹⁷ Pope, 3.

The findings of science and religion can be mutually enlightening. In particular, Pope deals with the dispute between the Christian contention that the world is intrinsically morally meaningful and the contention of evolutionary ontological naturalism that the world only has the meaning we give it.¹⁸

Significantly, Pope argues that “Our knowledge of nature, including evolution, cannot determine the content of theological or moral affirmations” but that evolution “can play a valuable role in helping us to understand important aspects of human nature and human flourishing.”¹⁹ The focus of this paper will be on the third part of Pope’s well-researched text which focuses on evolution and natural law. In particular I will stress its importance for a consideration of the virtues.²⁰ I should note here that classic Catholic moral theology such as that of Aquinas links natural law and the virtues. I find Pope’s work thorough and informative though I disagree with him on some of his conclusions.

I should note at the outset that Pope embraces the idea of emergence.

A nonreductionistic reading of evolution that recognizes its inherent directionality is consonant with Christian belief in creation and providence. The human race is the product of a process that has generated unprecedented forms of emergent complexity. Christian theologians have long maintained that God operates through the “secondary causes” made available by the evolutionary process. The account of human nature as constituted by emergent complexity helps us understand aspects of key notions in Christian ethics, particularly human freedom, love of neighbor, human dignity, morality, and natural law.²¹

Pope begins his chapter on the natural roots of morality by discussing three ways evolutionists account for social morality—either as adaptive, or an evolutionary by-product, or as a product of culture rather than biological evolution.²² He believes that these explanations, while inadequate, have something to teach us.

For example, in discussing social morality as an evolutionary by-product, Pope cites the scientist Francisco Ayala, who in discussing the biological roots of morality “holds that three evolved capacities provide the basis of morality:

- (i) the ability to anticipate the consequences of one’s own actions;
- (ii) the ability to make value judgments; and

¹⁸ 6.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “The basic structure of the book falls into three parts: The first part argues for the importance of current knowledge of evolution for Christian ethics in general (chs. 1-6), the second part examines ways in which evolution can enrich and inform our understanding of human nature and specifically regarding the themes of freedom, love, and human dignity (chs. 7-9), and the third part discusses the relevance of evolution to the natural-law tradition (chs.10-12)”, p.6.

²¹ 7.

²² 250.

(iii) The ability to choose between alternative courses of action.”²³

The capacity for morality is, of course, rooted in our biological constitution. “...the evolutionary process provides an emotional and cognitive constitution characterized by general proclivities, desires, or preferences, not a fixed moral code”²⁴ These emergent capacities enable the person to make moral decisions. These decisions are not determined by biological or genetic factors.

This is not to say that evolution has not shaped our rational and emotional capacities. These human capacities must be taken into consideration as one shapes moral judgments.

This reality of course fits well with the thinking of Aristotle and Aquinas that human

...natural abilities, powers or capacities [can be] gradually shaped by training, instruction, and habituation to become the adult’s ‘second nature’ that is, the virtues or vices that constitute character....We are capable of experiencing a variety of basic emotions but they can be subject to human evaluation and direction. Our moral responses to these predispositions can include introspection, criticism, deliberate redirection, and revision of the place they have in our lives.²⁵

The human person, while sometimes bowing inordinately to ‘fitness interests,’ is also capable of adhering to the highest moral ideals, such as Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, which call us to love—and love even of enemies. The saints bear witness with their lives to this possibility of loving. The tradition of the church however points to how difficult living this life of love can be. The pull of selfish interest or interest solely in our own group can be strong. Thus we have the practices of Lent—prayer, fasting and almsgiving—to discipline some of our evolutionary desires and concern ourselves with the good of others beyond our immediate clan or kin.

It is important to underline here that our contention is not, as it seems to be put often, that we believe basically either in God or in evolution. It is rather that “The God of Christian ethics continually sustains the world in being and orders it through the processes and patterns of nature.”²⁶ This is the typically Catholic both-and approach—both Catholic faith and good science. Science helps us to understand this human nature created by God. Christian practices can in fact fulfill human fitness needs.

But Christians go further and contend that nature both is both healed and transformed by grace. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts—where the heart here, as it did classically, stands for the whole person.

²³ 256

²⁴ 257

²⁵ 260

²⁶ 264

Original Selfishness

In concluding his chapter on the natural roots of morality, Pope says:

Fifth, Christian ethics would seem willing to accept the sociobiological doctrine that people tend to be selfish, both as individuals and as groups. This could be interpreted as one expression of the doctrine of original sin. Yet the Christian tradition distinguishes the condition of finitude and the premoral biological tendencies from the sinful selfishness generated by disordered choices and habits. Christian ethics has always been aware of the widespread tendency of individuals to prefer their own interests to those of others, to be biased toward members of their own groups and away from outsiders, and to rationalize self-serving behavior through morality....Yet Christian ethics understands the roots of immorality in religious rather natural terms—the distortion of the will and intellect by original and personal sin—and its awareness of human fault highlights the importance of transformation and self-discipline for the Christian life.²⁷

Here we see the importance of the reflection of our friend and colleague Daryl Domning who spoke this morning. In his previous writings, he confronts us with the evidence of original selfishness. Here he speaks of ‘selfishness’ in a non-pejorative way. He says: “Natural selection enforces selfish behavior as the price of survival and self-perpetuation in all living things, even the simplest imaginable. For non-human creatures altruistic behavior...seems to be explainable in terms of selfishness and individual advantage; but the reverse is not true. Hence selfish behavior must be the more primitive and fundamental condition.”²⁸ We all have this powerful tendency to act selfishly—which must be resisted with the help of grace and spiritual practices.

In his paper given this morning, “Chance, Darwinian Natural Selection, and Why Theology Can’t Do Without Them,” Dr. Domning refines his position in relating it to the work of Dr. Ulanowicz. Domning believes “Ulanowicz is right that ‘competition derives from mutuality’—but from mutuality at a *lower level*. Within any given level, competition is causally prior, and can bring forth cooperation, which then in turn can spark competition at a third, still higher level.” He goes on to say “What we have in this cooperation-competition dialectic...is a chicken-and-egg problem.”²⁹ Thus cooperation is built into the evolutionary process as well as competition.

Natural law in evolutionary context

Early in his book, Stephen Pope considers and offers his critique of distinguished Catholic moralists who do not avert to science and evolution in particular in their moral syntheses. In the penultimate chapter he offers an exposition and critique of four distinguished Catholic moralists who do include

²⁷ 267

²⁸ “Evolution, Evil and Original Sin,” *America* (November 12, 2001):18.

²⁹ Page 8 in draft text.

considerations of modern evolutionary science in their work. He summarizes his findings and then offers further considerations.

His summary is succinct yet comprehensive.

There are disputed points between them...but their points of agreement are more important for the purposes of this book. They are generally critical of evolutionary ideology and reductionism, insistent on our recognition of the embodied and material nature of humanity, alert to the interdependence of culture and biology in human nature, and aware of the fact that human rationality is always tradition-constituted. They all accept some of teleological view of human nature—the fact that we are naturally inclined to various kinds of goods, including biological goods—and understand these natural inclination as slowly tutored by communal practices that teach moral norms, ideals, and good habits.³⁰

Pope goes on to reflect on the natural law tradition. He notes that natural law for Christians is not limited to basic biological inclinations but included ‘distinctively human capacities.’ Natural law thinkers concern themselves with a comprehensive view of what is good for humans. Moral standards, based on basic human inclinations, promote human flourishing. Norms are not arbitrary or merely personal preferences, but reflect judgments about practices that promote flourishing for all humans.³¹

Pope believes as I do that the moral life is the life of virtue. The virtues “shape and perfect are capacities for knowing and loving.”³²They promote human flourishing. The central virtues are wisdom and charity. They perfect our basic emergent abilities to know and to love. Charity shapes the classic natural virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

Thus we return to Prudence, or practical wisdom, the virtue mentioned in our initial considerations. “The virtue of prudence allows the moral agent to perceive the morally salient factors at stake in concrete human experience.” The moral agent, as Pieper notes needs to be clear sighted in order to make good moral judgments.³³

Where I agree with Pope in much of his work, I differ with him is in his analysis of the conflict in pursuing moral goods. He notes that the moral tradition has tended to downplay the conflict between the goods that humans pursue. There can be, for example, a conflict between the need for security and the need

³⁰ 291.

³¹ See International Theological Commission, “In Search of Universal Ethic: A New Look at Natural Law,” (2009) found at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc.

³² 293

³³ For more on the virtue of Prudence according to Pieper see my *What are they saying about virtue?* Pp.14-21. for further references and an ecumenical approach see my “Prudence and the Future: An Ecumenically Shaped Ethic.” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 45/3(Summer 2010):426-32. Also see William C. Mattison III, *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008), 95-112 and James F. Keenan, SJ, “The Virtue of Prudence(IIallae, qq. 47-56)” in Stephen J. Pope, ed. *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 259-71.

for food. He says the “Yet it is still the case that human beings have been ‘set up’ by evolution to experience multiple inclinations that sometimes reinforce and at other times conflict with one another, and it is the case that communities are the scene of competition and conflict among and between both individuals and groups.”³⁴

He then goes on to take the position that at times the pursuit of a higher good may call for the direct negation of another good. Here Pope moves into a controverted arena in contemporary Catholic moral theology.

While he certainly is correct that there can be a conflict in the pursuit of goods and certainly this conflict is evident in nature, I am quite hesitant to countenance the direct negation of absolute human goods. I should note that Pope does not give this important matter extensive consideration in his penultimate chapter but merely mentions his position.

In the final chapter Pope offers a more detailed consideration of “sex, marriage and the family.” He gives his normal detailed consideration and analysis of evolutionary views. He notes that “‘Reproductively optimal acts’ can be morally either right or wrong, and generalizations about human differences do not carry clear and direct implications for our normative moral judgments about sex, marriage, or family.”³⁵ Scientific data is not in itself definitive for morality.

Pope contends that

If God creates in an improvisational way through the patterns and contingencies of the evolutionary process, then the natural structures of reproductive biology and the evolved basis of human sexuality have to be appropriated in a more circumspect and selective manner than one finds in classical natural law.³⁶

I part ways with him in his embrace of a revisionist position on contraception and some other contentious issues in contemporary sexual morality. His discussion is—as he says—not exhaustive. His position depends on a definition of natural law which some Catholic natural law thinkers might dispute.³⁷ I believe that the burden of proof rests with those who favor change in church teaching. The role of reason in natural law, and the direction that God gives to evolution could use further specification.

The problem of conflict of moral goods is also an important one that Pope raises. He cites the need for security vs. the need for food that individuals experience. Such conflicts between goods need significant reflection. My own preference is to rely on the virtue of prudence. I have discussed this virtue at some

³⁴ 293

³⁵ 301.

³⁶ 312

³⁷ See William E. May, *An Introduction to Moral Theology* 2nd ed. (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2003), Chapter Three.

length elsewhere. I should note in this context that the Catholic tradition developed over the centuries what I like to call 'Principles for Practical Cases' which help to guide prudential decision making in tough situations where there is a conflict of goods. The principle of Double Effect, the distinction of Ordinary and Extraordinary Means for Preserving Life, the Criteria for Just War and other systematic sets of criteria are aids to Prudential Judgment.

A problem here is one still must decide and there is uncertainty when we may want absolute clarity. For example, deciding to discontinue artificially provided nutrition and hydrations from a beloved family member is very hard even when the reasons for the decision are absolutely clear. The decision is even more difficult when the prudential judgment, following the best of Catholic thinking, leaves room for some doubt.

I also believe that it is important that the moral absolutes be honored. The absolutes can be protective of basic human rights. When such rights are violated produce moral outrage at their violation. Torturing innocent people is always wrong. In South America at one time, torture by absolutist regimes was common. This produced moral outrage and action. This situation was documented.³⁸

Pope concludes that Christian ethics inclines us to pursue the good for others. Christian ethics goes well beyond the ethic envisioned by evolutionary biology. "Christian ethics, then, regards human nature as properly developed in the virtues and above all in faith, hope and charity."³⁹ In this he and I agree.

The Human Person

A recent book from philosopher and priest Brendan Purcell entitled *From Big Bang to Big Mystery: Human Origins in the Light of Creation and Evolution* offers a profound synthesis of science, philosophy and faith. He makes a case "...for our massive belongingness to, along with our massive difference from, the rest of the material universe."⁴⁰ He seeks to show that humans are both continuous with and discontinuous from evolution.

His work is one of philosophical anthropology. His work differs from the detailed discussion of the relationship of evolutionary thought to Christian ethics we have seen in Stephen Pope. Purcell draws on work of leading paleontologists, paleoanthropologists, and other experts to develop his broad based synthesis.

³⁸ See my review of *O Acompanhamento: Ecumenical Action for Human Rights in Latin America 1970-1990* in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 43/4 (Fall 2008): 635-36.

³⁹ Purcell, 296.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16. See Celia Deane-Drummond who states 'Only the biological basis for the development of consciences and religion has evolved in nonhuman animals, and this should not be confused with sophisticated moral systems of analysis or particular religious beliefs found in the human community,' in "Are Animals Moral? A Theological Appraisal of the Evolution of Vice and Virtue," *Zygon*, 44/4 (December 2009): 932.

...so we will devote five chapters to filling out empirically just what makes a human being 'human' and why. Our focus will be on seven characteristics or grace notes in what we'll call 'the sonata for a good man'. All of which lead us—while emphatically embodied in the space-time universe—both to depths within ourselves and each other, as well as on principle beyond the edge of the observable universe....⁴¹

"The first trio of grace notes are amazing components of our humanness—firstly our specifically human genetic origins, secondly the cultural time-sequencing of our growth, and thirdly, in what often been described as the most complicated piece of matter in the entire universe, our brain and vocal tract. We'll speak of these as our trio of preconscious characteristics because they provide the material foundations for human consciousness."⁴²

1. The genetic 'African Eve & Adam'
2. Our culture-oriented body plan
3. Our meaning-oriented brain and vocal tract

These next two are not found in any of the pre-human hominids.⁴³

4. Symbolisation
5. Language

These last grace notes have been regarded as the most human of characteristics.

6. Understanding
7. Freedom⁴⁴

The notes distinguish humans from other living things.⁴⁵ Each of these notes is discussed at great length with much reference to the professional literature but also with reference to theology, to major literary works and to the example of some outstanding individuals. Purcell contends that the last four notes can be reformulated to go far beyond the needs for survival and reproduction to the horizons of beauty, meaning, truth and goodness.

This work is in many ways a work about the culture that Pope speaks of in his detailed analysis we have mentioned above. Purcell's extensive discussion of the grace notes gives us great insight into the culture that makes for moral development.

Purcell summarizes:

⁴¹ 30.

⁴² 189-90

⁴³ 207

⁴⁴ Purcell offers an overview of his chapters on pp. 30-31.

⁴⁵ See Purcell, Chapter Six.

As embodied, we're rooted in the over 13 billion years natural history of the cosmos, and in the almost 4 billion years of biological evolutionary history on Earth.

Yet the theme of the later chapters of this book beginning with the notion of the 'human revolution'—what Richard Klein called 'the Big Bang of human consciousness'—have brought out a persistent discontinuity between humans and the later non-human hominids. As we move up the scale of the dynamic sequence of interaction between emergent materials and their corresponding higher syntheses, from atoms to compounds to bacteria, plants and animals, the higher syntheses are increasingly less dependent on their material basis. As we've seen, the specifically human level of existence is so 'independent' of its biological basis that a human being may sometimes rationally and freely decide to forego survival for the sake of a higher value like truth or freedom⁴⁶

Purcell's thinking is relational. We are most human when we are in communion, in relationship with one another and with God. To do this we must empty ourselves and immerse ourselves in the other's society and culture. He cites Martin Buber to the effect that we must make the soul of others ours.

Conclusions

Having begun by quoting Josef Pieper on the meaning of the virtue of prudence let me conclude with a few reflections based on his thinking. Christian moral anthropology is essentially concerned with the virtues.

And so virtue, in a quite general sense, raises the level of existence of the human person. Virtue is, as Thomas [Aquinas] says, the *ultimum potentiae*; it is the ultimate of what a human person can be; it is the fulfillment of man's [sic] ability to *be*—in the natural and supernatural sphere. The virtuous person *is* in such a way that, from the innermost tendency of his being, he realizes the good through his actions.⁴⁷

The central virtue for moral judgment is prudence. "The first of the cardinal virtues is not only the quintessence of ethical maturity, but in so being is the quintessence of moral freedom."⁴⁸ Prudence is the virtue of mature moral judgment. The prudent person can make wise judgments in particular situations.

Catholics believe that our moral judgments can be guided by moral absolutes. Certain heinous acts can never be perfective of the person. They can never be acts of virtue. Certain good acts, acts of love, can be perfective of the person and of the community. There are many daily situations that do not involve moral absolutes but call for good prudential judgments about how best to live with and for others.

⁴⁶ 320-21.

⁴⁷ Josef Pieper, *The Christian Idea of Man*, preface by John Haldane, ed. Dan Farrelly (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2011),11,

⁴⁸ Pieper as quoted in Hibbs, p.117.

I don't believe that a convincing argument has yet been made on evolutionary grounds for changing Catholic teaching on moral absolutes. I do believe that a convincing case has been made by Pope and by Purcell that Catholic moral theology would benefit from paying more attention to the findings of contemporary science.

Catholic moral theology needs to seek the truth wherever it may be found. This search confronts us with the fact—emphasized in the biblical teaching but not emphasized as much in the recent neo-scholastic period—that we are bodily creatures with certain inclinations. Christians must be formed by practices that enhance our inclinations to do the good for others, our altruistic tendencies, and limit our selfish inclinations. The virtues, our habits of doing good, help to integrate all aspects of the person. It is the total person who acts. The virtuous person, using his or her emergent abilities to understand and to love, both knows and loves the good.

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