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The Vatican Declaration on Sexual Ethics and the Moral Methodology of Vatican Council II

William E. May

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On Dec. 29, 1975, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics. This Declaration took up three specific questions: premarital sex, homosexual activity, and masturbation. Reaffirming the longstanding teaching of the Church that every "genital act must be within the framework of marriage," it concluded that these three types of genital activity are intrinsically disordered and ought not to be freely chosen by human persons if they are to act in accord with the moral norms. By reasserting the received teaching of the Church, the Sacred Congregation rejected the opinions of several contemporary Catholic moral theologians, who claim that at times these forms of sexual activity can be morally good.

My concern here is not with the judgment made by the Declaration on the intrinsic immorality of premarital sex, homosexual activity, and masturbation. Rather, it is with the moral reasoning or methodology used to support these judgments, with the norms to which the Declaration appeals for making good moral judgments. I am particularly interested in seeing how the Declaration's methodology is related to the principles set forth in key documents of Vatican Council II and to the moral reasoning used in those documents.

Interest in this issue is prompted by the fact that Charles E. Curran, in an article originally published in Linacre Quarterly, faulted this Vatican document precisely because, in his opinion, it used a method of moral reasoning completely incompatible with the methodology employed in the documents of Vatican Council II, in particular, in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes). Specifically, Curran claims that the Vatican Declaration, like Humanae Vitae and unlike the documents of Vatican Council II, is "ahistorical," aprioristic and deductive, "physicalistic" and legalistic, paying insufficient attention to the human and personal aspects of human sexuality while one-sidedly emphasizing principles alleged to be "eternal, objective and universal" and focusing on the physical, as opposed to the personal, "structure of the sexual act itself." In addition, Curran claims that the Declaration, unlike St. Thomas Aquinas (and, by implication, Vatican Council II), "asserts with too great a certitude the existence of immutable, eternal, and universal norms in the area of sexuality." Here, Curran claims, Aquinas (and by implication Vatican Council II) was more modest, recognizing "that as one descends to more particular questions, the laws more readily admit of exceptions and oblige only ut in pluribus" (i.e., for the most part).

The criticisms that Curran makes of the Vatican Declaration are very serious. If, as he claims, its way of moral reasoning is such that it cannot be reconciled with the moral reasoning found in the documents of Vatican Council II, it would seem to follow that the value of the Declaration as an authoritative source of Church teaching is quite questionable. Still, one can ask whether Curran's critique of the document is correct. In order to determine whether it is or not, it seems necessary (1) to examine the teaching of the Declaration and, in particular, to look closely at its moral methodology and (2) to examine the moral reasoning found in key documents of Vatican Council II and relate this to the methodology found in the Declaration. Once these tasks are completed, we will be in a position to assess Curran's critique and, in doing so, also offer some observations about his appeal to St. Thomas.

I. The Teaching of the Declaration and Its Methodology

The basic presuppositions and moral methodology of the Vatican Declaration are essentially set forth in its first five numbered sections. The Declaration begins by recognizing that sexuality "must be considered as one of the factors which give to each individual's life the principal traits that distinguish it." Indeed, the document insists that "it is from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological, and spiritual levels make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society" (emphasis added). From this it would appear that the Vatican Declaration, far from reducing sexuality to the level of a physical and biological phenomenon, insists from the very beginning on its human, personal and, indeed, spiritual significance. This claim of the document seems to echo the thoughts of Catholic personalists on the significance of human sexuality. It seems, for instance, to be quite in accord with the thought of Dietrich von Hildebrand, one of the foremost proponents of personalism in recent Catholic thought. For the authors of the Vatican Declaration, as for Von Hildebrand,

Sex... is essentially deep. Every manifestation of sex produces an effect which transcends the physical sphere, and, in a fashion quite unlike the
other bodily desires, involves the soul deeply in its passion. It is a characteristic of sex that in virtue of its very significance and nature it tends to become incorporated with experiences of a higher order, purely psychological and spiritual. Sex represents a factor in human nature which intellectually seeks to play a decisive part in man's life. [Sex] can indeed remain silent, but when it speaks it is no more obiter dictum, but a voice from the depths, the utterance of something central and of utmost significance.

After stressing the human significance of human sexuality, the Declaration then observes, perhaps as a brief reading of the “signs of the times,” that in the world today several educators, teachers, and moralists have “been able to contribute to a better understanding and integration into life of the values proper to each of the sexes.” Whereas others have “put forward concepts and modes of behavior which are contrary to the true moral exigencies of the human person” (emphasis added).

Continuing, the Declaration notes that at the present time there is a great deal of confusion among ordinary people about matters of sexual morality, with some wondering whether or not the recently teaching of the Church on sexual matters is still to be regarded as true. The Declaration then states that the Church — and here it obviously has in mind the teaching authority in the Church — simply cannot allow such confusion to continue. It cannot do this precisely because the subject matter at issue “is of the utmost importance both for the personal lives of Christians and the social life of our time.” Here again the Declaration shows that it is interested in questions of sexual morality precisely because of their human and personal significance.

The Declaration then insists that “there can be no true promotion of man’s dignity unless the essential order of his nature is respected.” It recognizes that human beings are historical creatures and that “many of the concrete conditions and needs of human life have changed and will continue to change.” Here we have clear evidence that the authors of the Declaration are sensitive to the historically conditioned character of human existence. Yet the Declaration continues by claiming that “all evolution of morals and every type of life must be kept within the limits imposed by the immutable principles based upon every human person’s constitutive elements and essential relations — elements and relations which transcend historical contingency.”

In other words, in its methodology, the Declaration contends that there are universal and transhistorical moral principles in terms of which changing historical conditions are to be morally evaluated. It does not ignore history, but rather claims that the historically changing elements in human existence are capable of being morally evaluated in the light of objective and metaphistorical moral norms.

To support this claim the document then appeals to a very important passage in the Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae) of Vatican Council II. According to the Council Fathers, in the passage cited:

The highest norm of human life is the divine law — eternal, objective and universal — whereby God orders, directs and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community, by a plan conceived in wisdom and love. Man has been made by God to participate in this law, with the result that, under the gentle disposition of divine providence, he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth.

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I shall return to this important passage from Dignitatis Humanae later, when I consider the moral reasoning that is found in the documents of Vatican Council II. What is significant here is that the Vatican Declaration appeals to this passage to support its claim that there are unchanging principles of morality, that these principles are ultimately rooted in God’s divine and eternal law, and that God has so made human persons that they are capable of sharing in this and of coming to understand its abiding principles.

The Declaration next rejects the view proposed by some contemporaries that the only universally binding norm for human action is the “general law of charity and respect for human dignity.” It insists that the more specific norms of the natural law (as a participation in God’s eternal law) and the more specific precepts of Sacred Scripture (as participating in the divinely revealed plan for human existence) are by no means culturally and historically conditioned but rather disclose “the authentic exigencies of human nature” and manifest the existence of immutable laws inscribed in the constitutive elements of human nature.” 20 To support this claim the Declaration once again appeals explicitly to an instructive passage from Dignitatis Humanae in which the Fathers of Vatican Council II spoke of the competence of the Church to interpret not only revealed positive law but also those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself.” 21

After reminding its readers that the “Church throughout her history has always considered a certain number of precepts of the natural law as having an absolute and immutable value,” 22 the Declaration then considers the fundamental principles and values, rooted in the being of human persons, that are relevant in judging the morality of genital acts. In identifying these principles and values, the Declaration again has recourse to the teaching of Vatican Council II, this time to the teaching set forth in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes). Referring to this document, the Declaration makes its own the teaching of Gaudium et Spes that human sexuality and the human power to give life are personal in nature and hence “wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life.” With Gaudium et Spes it insists that the norms or criteria governing genital activity are objective in character and, “based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love.” 23 From this it is evident that the Declaration, in union with Gaudium et Spes, sees in the values or goods of “mutual self-giving” and “human procreation in the context of true love,” the goods (ends, purposes) toward which genital activity is to be ordered. These goods, in short, constitute the “finality of the sexual act.” The Declaration then claims that “respect for this finality” is the “principal criterion” according to which sexual activity is to be judged and that respect for this finality, i.e., for the goods of mutual self-giving and human procreation, “ensures the moral goodness” of sexual activity. 24 According to the Declaration, moreover, this is the principal criterion for assembling the morality of sexual activity proposed by Gaudium et Spes. 25

In the previous pages I have summarized the moral reasoning or methodology of the Vatican Declaration. It is useful at this point to capitalize this methodology in a few key propositions. This can be done as follows:

1. The highest norm of human life is God’s divine law, eternal, objective, and universal.
2. Human persons have been so constituted by God that they are capable, by the exercise of their intelligence, of inwardly participating in this law of God, coming to know in an ever more secure way the unchanging truths meant to guide human choices and actions which the law contains.
3. This human search for unchanging truth is not easy, and it is for this reason that God has, through divine revelation, made His law and its unchanging truths known to mankind.
4. Nonetheless, these unchanging truths of the moral order (of God’s “eternal, objective, and universal law”) can be known by human intelligence insofar as these truths are rooted in the being of human persons and in the constitutive elements of human nature. Moreover, the Church has the competence to give authoritative interpretation to God’s divine law, both as it has been publicly revealed and as it is capable of being humanly known.
5. This divine, eternal law (which, as participated in by human persons, is the natural law) embraces not only general precepts such as the precept that we are to love God and others, but also more particular and specific norms that are absolutely binding, transcending historical and cultural situations precisely because they are rooted in constitutive elements of human nature and human persons and conform to the exigencies of human persons.
6. In matters concerning genital sexual activity, the immutable and unchanging goods or values of human persons which must be respected are those of mutual self-giving and the procreation of human life in the context of true love. Unyielding respect for these goods of human persons and of human sexuality is the criterion or moral norm which must be used in judging the morality of sexual activity.

Applying this criterion, the Declaration subsequently judges that genital sexual activity is morally upright only when it is chosen within the elements of marriage. Thus it likewise judges that the three specific types of genital sex with which it is explicitly concerned (premarital sex, homosexual activity, and masturbation) must be regarded as being intrinsically disordered.

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2. The Moral Reasoning Found in Key Texts of Vatican Council II

Of the 16 documents of Vatican Council II, the two that are of central importance for this topic are the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) and the Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae). These are two key documents to which the Vatican Declaration, as we have seen, appealed as support of its own teaching. Curran, it will be recalled, faulted the Vatican Declaration on the grounds that its method of moral reasoning could not be reconciled with that found in Vatican Council II, particularly in Gaudium et Spes. It is thus of crucial importance for us to examine these documents for their way of moral reasoning.

I shall begin with Dignitatis Humanae. A central passage from this document has already been cited, insofar as it was quoted by the Vatican Declaration. It will be useful here to cite this passage again, which reads:

The highest norm of human life is the divine law — eternal, objective, and universal — whereby God orders, directs and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community, by a plan conceived in wisdom and love. Man has been made by God to participate in this law, with the result that, under the gentle disposition of divine providence, he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth.

The passage is cited to this point by the Vatican Declaration. The passage makes it clear that for the Fathers of Vatican Council II there is an objective moral order, and that this objective moral order finds its ultimate expression in the divine and eternal law. Moreover, although it does not use the expression “natural law,” this passage clearly teaches that human persons, alone of all material creation, are so made by God that they can truly participate in this divine and eternal law. But this is precisely how the natural law has been understood in the tradition of the Church; that is, the way the Council Fathers understand it is made very clear by the fact that at this point in the official text the Fathers make explicit reference to three texts of St. Thomas Aquinas. In one of these texts, and obviously it was in the minds of those who drafted Dignitatis Humanae, Aquinas wrote: “The eternal law is unchanging truth, and everyone somehow knows this truth, at least the general principles of the natural law (even though in other matters some people share more and some less in the knowledge of the truth).” Thus by conscious design the Council Fathers said that human persons participate in the eternal law, and they obviously make their own Aquinas’s “definition” of “natural law” as the “participation of the eternal law in the rational creature,” for, as Aquinas continues in this same place, the rational creature is subject to divine providence in a more excellent way than other material creatures, as is thus a sharer in divine providence, an opinion obviously shared by the Fathers of Vatican Council II.

This particular passage from Dignitatis Humanae continues, in a part not explicitly cited by the Vatican Declaration, by saying that every man, precisely because he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth, “has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth.” The implication here is obvious. One normative proposal contained in the divine and eternal (and, by participation, in the natural) law is that human persons ought to seek the truth and to shape their lives by it. Finally, the passage in question continues by saying that “on his part man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience.”

I shall return to the question of conscience shortly. I wish to emphasize that Dignitatis Humanae here clearly indicates that the “highest norm of human life,” i.e., the divine, eternal law (and, by participation, the natural law) contains more than one universally binding and unchanging truth which, in short, includes a number of universally binding “imperatives” or norms.

Another key passage in Dignitatis Humanae — and once more, it is a passage to which the Vatican Declaration explicitly refers — is the one in which the Council Fathers unequivocally state that the Catholic faithful must, in forming their own consciences, “pay careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the Church.” They should do so, the Council Fathers maintain, because

The Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth. It is her duty to proclaim and teach with authority the truth which is Christ and, at the same time, to declare and confirm by her authority the principles of the moral order which spring from human nature itself. Note that in this passage Dignitatis Humanae refers to principles of the moral order. This obviously means that in the minds of its authors the moral order (which ultimately is identified with God’s divine and eternal law and which, punitively, is the natural law which human persons are capable of knowing) embraces not simply one universal norm or principle, but a multitude of such universally binding principles. Note, too, that the Council Fathers here explicitly teach that these principles are rooted in human nature.

Dignitatis Humanae, in speaking of human participation in God’s divine and eternal law, affirmed that human persons come to acknowledge the requirements or imperatives of this law “through the mediation of conscience.” This document did not, however, elaborate on this point. Yet the key role of conscience in moral life is explicitly taken up in another central document of Vatican II, namely in Gaudium et Spes. There we find, in a passage to which the Vatican Declaration explicitly refers, that the Council Fathers had this to say:

Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, tells him inwardly at the right moment, do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God. His dignity lies in observing this law, and by it he will be judged.

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"Conscience," continued the Council, citing Pope Pius XII, "is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths." 35 Fidelity to conscience means a "search for truth" and for true solutions to moral problems. Conscience can indeed err "through invincible ignorance without losing its dignity" (so long as there is sufficient "care for the search for the true and the good"); but "to the extent that a correct conscience holds sway, persons and groups turn away from blind choice and seek to conform to the objective norms of morality" (emphasis added). From all this it is quite evident, as John M. Finnis has so well said, that it was the Council's unwavering teaching that the dignity of conscience consists in its capacity to disclose the objective truth about what is to be done, both in particular assessments and in general norms, and that truth has its truth as an intention of God whose voice is our law. The law is knowable by us because we "participate in the light of the divine truth" (Gaudium et Spes, n. 15). 37 The above passage confirms the teaching of Dignitatis Humanae, the Council Fathers (after noting that human activity is of critical importance not only for what it gets done but also and even more importantly because it develops human persons and gives to them, since it is self-determining and free, their identity as moral beings), go on to propose a norm of criterion for human action. Obviously this norm is subordinate to the ultimate norm of human life already identified in Dignitatis Humanae (namely, God's divine law, eternal, objective, and universal), but it is nonetheless proposed by the Council as a true moral norm for guiding human choices and actions. This norm, the Council Fathers assert, ...is that in accord with the divine plan and will, human activity should harmonize with the genuine good of the human race, and allow men as individuals and as members of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfill it. 38 By affirming this, the Council Fathers, it seems to me, are asserting that human persons, in making good moral choices, are to choose in such a way that in their choices and actions they reverence and respect whatever is really a good of human persons. Negatively, they ought not freely choose to reject, set aside, damage, destroy, or impede what is really good for human persons and societies. Love for God, the highest good, and for human persons, in whom God wills that such real goods as life itself, truth, friendship, justice, and moral integrity are to flourish, requires one to choose in this way. 39 The Fathers of Vatican II, in addition to affirming that the moral order, ultimately, is established by God's eternal law and that human beings are to do and pursue what is good and avoid what is evil and choose in such a way that they respect every true good of human persons and societies, also insist that there are some very specific moral norms which are universally binding, transcending historical and cultural conditions. Thus, in a crucial section of Gaudium et Spes, where the Council Fathers confronted the terrible problem of war, they deemed it necessary "first of all" to recall to mind for all human beings "the permanent binding force of universal natural law and its all-embracing principles. Man's conscience," the Fathers declared, "itself gives ever more emphatic voice to these principles. Therefore, actions which deliberately conflict with these same principles, as well as orders commanding such actions, are criminal." 40 The Council Fathers went on to apply these universally binding principles to specific sorts of actions in war, declaring that "every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, and merits firm and unequivocal condemnation." 41 In Gaudium et Spes, moreover, the Council Fathers clearly taught that a respect for human persons and for the goods meant to flourish in them absolutely brands as criminal and immoral very specific sorts of actions. The Fathers insisted that "crimes" against the human person are numerous, and they went on to say, All offenses against life itself, such as murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and willful self-destruction; all violations of the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and mental torture, undue psychological pressures; all offenses against human dignity, such as submarin living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, degrading working conditions where men are treated as mere tools for profit rather than free and responsible persons; all these and their like are criminal; they poison civilization; and they debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honor of the Creator. 42 From this it is abundantly clear that the Fathers of Vatican Council II are firmly convinced that God's divine and eternal law, in which human persons can intelligently participate, includes some very specific moral norms which are absolutely and universally binding. The Council, moreover, clearly taught that norms of this kind are found in the area of sexual morality. Here, as we have already seen in reviewing the teaching of the Vatican Declaration where it appealed to the teaching of Gaudium et Spes, the Council Fathers clearly teach that "mutual self-giving" and "human procreation in the context of true love" are the human goods at stake in genital choices. Such choices can be morally right only when they are made in full respect for these goods of human sexuality holds sway, for this is the criterion for judging the morality of sexual activity. 43 And according to the thought of those...
who drafted *Gaudium et Spes*, respect for these goods of human sexuality require that genital activity be chosen only within the covenant of marriage" (i.e., genital acts), and go on to condemn sequentially adultery, polygamy, free love, and similar acts. They likewise insist that even spouses are acting wrongly whenever they choose sexual acts that do not fully respect the goods of mutual self-giving and of human procreation.

From all of the above, it is now evident that the methodology found in the Vatican Council II is remarkably similar to that in the Vatican Declaration. Or, better put, it seems evident that the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in drafting the Vatican Declaration, took pains to adopt a moral methodology supported by the texts of the Council. I believe that the foregoing account of the moral reasoning used by the Council Fathers fully warrants me in judging that the key propositions set forth in the end of the section concerned with the moral reasoning found in the Declaration as a summary of its thought, are also found in the documents of Vatican II. It will be useful here to repeat these key propositions and to indicate where each of these propositions is affirmed in the documents of Vatican Council II.

1. The highest norm of human life is God's divine law, eternal, objective and universal (*Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 3).

2. Human persons have been so constituted by God that they are capable, by the exercise of their intelligence, of inwardly participating in this law of God, coming to know in an even more secure way the unchanging truths meant to guide human choices and actions which it contains (*Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 3; *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 16, 17).

3. This human search for unchanging truth is not easy, and it is for this reason that God has, through divine revelation, made His law and its unchanging truths known to mankind. (One of the difficulties for our search for truth in moral matters, see *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 16, 17; in my review of the documents of Vatican II I did not explicitly take up the second matter affirmed in this proposition, i.e., God's help for our struggle by divine revelation, but on this see *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 17 and *Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 14.)

4. Nonetheless, these unchanging truths of the moral order (of God's "eternal, objective, and universal law") can be known by human intelligence insofar as these truths are rooted in the being of human persons and in the constitutive elements of our nature. Moreover, the Church has the competence to give authoritative interpretation to God's divine law, both as it has been publicly revealed and as it is capable of being humanly known (*Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 3, n. 14; *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 16, 17, 51).

5. This divine, eternal law (which, as participated in by human persons, is the natural law) embraces not only general precepts such as the precept that we are to love God and others, but also more particular and specific norms which are absolutely binding, transcending historical and cultural situations precisely because they are rooted in constitutive elements of human nature and human persons and conform to the exigencies of human persons (*Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 27, 51, 79-80; *Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 14).

6. In matters concerning genital sexual activity, the immutable and unchanging goods or values of human persons which must be respected are those of mutual self-giving and the procreation of human life in the context of true love. Unyielding respect for these goods of human persons and of human sexuality is the criterion or moral norm which must be used in judging the morality of sexual activity (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 51).

Conclusion

In the introduction to this paper, I noted that interest in the issue was prompted by Curran's article in which he claimed that the methodology found in the Vatican Declaration simply could not be reconciled with the moral reasoning found in the documents of Vatican Council II, in particular in *Gaudium et Spes*. In my opinion, a close study of both the Declaration and the relevant texts from Vatican Council II shows that this charge levelled against the Declaration by Curran simply cannot be accepted. To the contrary, there is remarkable continuity between the moral reasoning set forth in the documents of Vatican Council II and in the Vatican Declaration. The latter document, therefore, would seem to be firmly rooted in the thought of Vatican Council II, and the specific judgments it makes on premarital sex, homosexual activity, and masturbation are firmly grounded in the moral norms proposed by the Fathers of Vatican Council II.

Before concluding, however, I think it necessary to comment on Curran's use of St. Thomas Aquinas. It will be recalled that Curran, in criticizing the Vatican Declaration, faulted it for too easily affirming the existence of universally binding norms in the area of sexual morality. He implied that St. Thomas was far from making such claims (and, by inference, that Vatican Council II refrained from making such claims). To support his interpretation, Curran appealed to two passages from the Common Doctor in which Aquinas noted that the more one descends in particulars in moral matters, the more one discovers that the norms in question are only valid for the most part but may not apply in particular cases.

It is not possible here to enter into a full examination of the thought of St. Thomas. Yet it needs to be said that Aquinas was quite clear in holding that there are certain sorts or kinds of human acts

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which are secundum se or intrinsically evil by virtue of their moral object or subject-matter. Moreover, in the Seconda Secundae of his Summa Theologiae, St. Thomas specifically names certain kinds of human acts that are always morally wrong because they are evil secundum se or intrinsically. Among these are the acts of stealing, lying, fornicating, committing adultery or having sexual relations with someone who is not one's spouse, and intending to kill a fellow human being on one's own authority. The list given, moreover, is illustrative, and not taxative. In short, for Aquinas these are some human acts which are always wrong and, therefore, some moral norms which are absolutely binding. It was his firm teaching that the precepts of the Decalogue are not even dispensable or intrinsically evil by virtue of their moral wrong because they are necessarily wicked or secundum se evil. Thus the impression that Curran gives of Aquinas's thinking is simply not accurate.

REFERENCES

1. The Latin title of the document is Persona Humana. It is available from the Publications Office of the USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.N., Washington, D.C. 20005. Hereafter it shall be referred to as Vatican Declaration.
2. Vatican Declaration, n. 7.
3. Ibid., nn. 7, 8, and 9.
6. Ibid., p. 39.
7. Ibid., pp. 38-42.
8. Ibid., pp. 40-41. Here Curran refers to the teaching of St. Thomas in Summa Theologiae 1-2, articles 4 and 5.

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