

# Love in Action: Christian Ethics in a Pluralistic World



AMERICAN  
NATIONAL  
CATHOLIC  
THEOLOGICAL  
INSTITUTE

Fall 2021

Saturdays, 09/04 - 11/13 (Zoom)

11:00 am - 12:30 pm (EST)

Fr. Kerry Walters, Instructor

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## Required Texts

Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: A New Testament Perspective*. (trans. Brother John of Taizé). Liturgical Press Academic, 2020.

William O'Neill, SJ, *Catholic Social Teaching: A User's Guide*. Orbis Books, 2021.

*The New American Bible*, revised edition (NABRE). Other translations may be used, although the NABRE is preferred. But please: No paraphrases like *The Message*.

## Description

The foundation of Christian virtue is love. But in our increasingly diverse world, it's sometimes difficult to know what the loving thing to do is. How do we go about loving properly when confronted with issues such as immigration, climate change, political tribalism, poverty, sexual and ethnic identities, and violence? What theoretical principles and practical strategies can Christians call upon?

This course is an exploration of answers to these questions. We'll spend some time focusing on the nature of love and its relationship to happiness, virtue, and fulfillment before turning to concrete applications of it in the world. Throughout the course we'll refer frequently to the scriptural foundations that ground Christian morality.

By the end of the course, participants will have acquired:

- An understanding of the scriptural foundation of Christian ethics;
- A deeper appreciation for the uniqueness of Christian ethics;
- Familiarity with the connection between Christian love ethics and Greek virtue ethics;

- Strategies for putting Christian ethics into practice in a secular world;
- Preparation for moral leadership in parishes.

## Requirements

The course will operate like a seminar, with minimal lecture and ample opportunity for discussion during our meeting times. On each Wednesday before our Saturday Zoom gatherings, I'll send participants a short (generally no more than 10 minutes) video clip outlining the main points of the week's readings. This will allow us to hit the ground running during our sessions together.

I ask that you be conscientious in keeping up with the readings and attending the Zoom sessions. But I recognize that sometimes life gets in the way, so each session will be recorded to make sure that you can catch up if you absolutely must miss a class.

**Students in formation for Holy Orders** will be asked to write three short (no more than 3 typewritten pages) papers on assigned topics. In addition, and in consultation with me, you'll be asked to collaborate with your parish in the creation of an outreach program that reflects one or more of the moral topics explored in the course—poverty, racism, gender identity, immigration, or violence. Finally, you'll be asked to write an end-of-term paper (no longer than 6 typewritten pages) reflecting on the role of deacons and priests as moral leaders. Fuller guidelines for these requirements will be provided in class.

**Students not in formation but taking the course for credit** have the same requirements with this exception: you'll be asked to write an end-of-term paper reflecting on your moral responsibility as Christians.

**Students who are auditing** the course are exempt from the course requirements, although asked to be diligent in attendance and reading and to participate fully in the class discussions. But you're perfectly welcome (and encouraged!) to take on any or all of the non-formation credit requirements.

**Final course grades for credit students** of Pass/Fail will be based on class participation and written papers. But individual assignments will receive the following evaluations:

**E** = Excellent (Approximate equivalent to: A+, A, A-)

**S** = Satisfactory (Approximate equivalent to B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-)

**U** = Unsatisfactory (Equivalent to F) **W** = Withdrawal (Student withdrawal from course for any reason)

**WP** = Withdrawal Passing (withdrawal with course at least half completed successfully)

**WT** = withdrawal based on exceeding the withdrawal time limit. Accordingly, work rated "E" or "S" will be recorded as a Pass; work that is unsatisfactory will be recorded as a Fail. Participants

should also refer to the Institute's Policy and Procedures (available on the Institute's website at <https://ancti.org> ) regarding withdrawal from courses.

## Semester Schedule

- 09/04:** Christian Morality in a Pluralistic Culture. No Readings  
**09/11:** Casuistry, Vatican II, & *imitatio Christi*. Kamionouchi, pp. 3-28, 51-54  
**09/18:** Jesus & Aristotle. Kamionouchi, pp. 55-81 **1st paper assignment (due 10/02)**  
**09/25:** Christian Ethics & Happiness. Kamionouchi, pp. 85-115  
**10/02:** Beatitudinal Virtues. Kamionouchi, pp. 116-156  
**10/09:** The Heart of the Matter. Kamionouchi, pp. 157-189 **2nd paper assignment (due 10/30)**  
**10/16:** *No Class – Fr. Walters is away*  
**10/23:** Love in Action: Justice & the Common Good. O'Neill, pp. 3-53  
**10/30:** Love in Action: Poverty, Racism, Gender Identity. O'Neill, pp. 69-87  
**11/06:** Love in Action: Violence. O'Neill, pp. 89-107 **3rd paper assignment (due 11/20)**  
**11/13:** Love in Action: Immigration & Reconciliation. O'Neill, pp. 119-142  
**11/20:** Final paper due

One of the scribes asked Jesus, "What is the most important commandment?" Jesus replied, "*The most important is: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:28-31

"Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything."

Father Zosima in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*

