

READER



The Good

AN EXPLORATION OF
CATHOLIC HUMANISM

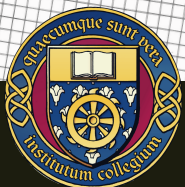


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‘Our Hearts Are Restless’

The Search for Meaning and Happiness

- *Which goods do we seem to pursue in this life, at least most of the time?*
- *Are the goods we pursue usually the ones we believe we ought to pursue? If not, why not?*
- *Why do you think we often seem to be restless? What are people restless for?*
- *Why are answers that are just ‘pragmatic’ inadequate for the search for meaning?*
- *What about our lives indicates a desire for the infinite?*
- *Why do you think Dorothy Day finds natural happiness to be a launching pad for a deeper desire for a deeper happiness?*
- *What is human fullness and why do we so often feel empty?*
- *What do feelings like nostalgia and homesickness tell us about the human condition?*
- *From these readings, what do you think the good is for the human person?*

Session 1

I

| *Inferno*: Canto 1, Lines 1-63, 1300 A.D.

Dante Alighieri

Midway in the journey of our
life I came to myself in a dark
wood, for the straight way was
lost.

Ah, how hard it is to tell
the nature of that wood, savage, dense,
and harsh—
the very thought of it renews my fear!

It is so bitter death is hardly more
so. But to set forth the good I
found I will recount the other
things I saw.

How I came there I cannot really tell,
I was so full of sleep when I forsook the
one true way.

But when I reached the foot of a
hill, there where the valley ended
that had pierced my heart with fear,

looking up, I saw its shoulders
arrayed in the first light of the
planet
that leads men straight, no matter what
their road.

Then the fear that had endured
in the lake of my heart, all the
night I spent in such distress,
was calmed.

And as one who, with laboring
breath, has escaped from the

deep to the shore turns and looks
back at the perilous waters,

So my mind, still in flight,
turned back to look once more upon the
pass no mortal being ever left alive.

After I rested my wearied flesh a while,
I took my way again along the desert
slope, my firm foot always lower than the
other.

But now, near the beginning of the
steep, a leopard light and swift
and covered with a spotted pelt

refused to back away from me
but so impeded, barred the
way,
that many times I turned to go back down.

It was the hour of morning,
when the sun mounts with those stars that
shone with it when God's own love

first set in motion those fair things,
so that, despite that beast with gaudy fur,
I still could hope for good, encouraged

by the hour of the day and the sweet
season, only to be struck by fear
when I beheld a lion in my way.

He seemed about to pounce—
his head held high and furious with hunger

—so that the air appeared to tremble at
him.

And then a she-wolf who, all hide and
bones, seemed charged with all the
appetites that have made many live in
wretchedness

so weighed my spirits down with
terror, which welled up at the sight of
her,
that I lost hope of making the ascent.

And like one who rejoices in his
gains but when the time comes
and he loses,
turns all his thought to sadness and
lament,

such did the restless beast make
me—coming against me, step by
step,
it drove me down to where the sun is
silent.

While I was fleeing to a lower
place, before my eyes a figure
showed, faint, in the wide
silence.

Session 1

II

| *Confessions*, 400 A.D.

St. Augustine

Great are You, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Your power, and of Your wisdom there is no end. And man, being a part of Your creation, desires to praise You — man, who bears about with him his mortality, the witness of his sin, even the witness that You resist the proud, — yet man, this part of Your creation, desires to praise You. You move us to delight in praising You; for You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You. [*cor nostrum inquietum est donec requiescat in Te*] Lord, teach me to know and understand which of these should be first: to call on You, or to praise You; and likewise to know You, or to call on You. But who calls upon You without knowing You? For he that does not know You may call upon You as other than You are. Or perhaps we call on You that we may know You. But how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe without a preacher? (Romans 10:14) And those who seek the Lord shall praise Him. For those who seek shall find Him, (Matthew 7:7) and those who find Him shall praise Him. Let me seek You, Lord, in calling on You, and call on You in believing in You; for You have been preached unto us. O Lord, my faith calls on You — that faith which You have imparted to me, which You have breathed into me through the incarnation of Your Son, through the ministry of Your preacher.

Session 1

III

| “Questions They Never Asked Me”, 1977

Walker Percy

This life is too much trouble, far too strange, to arrive at the end of it and then to be asked what you make of it and have to answer, 'Scientific humanism.' That won't do. A poor show. Life is a mystery; love is a delight. Therefore I take it as axiomatic that one should settle for nothing less than the infinity mystery and the infinite delight, i.e., God. In fact I demand it. I refuse to settle for anything less. I don't see why anyone should settle for less than Jacob, who actually grabbed hold of God and would not let go until God identified himself and blessed him.

Session 1

IV

| *The Long Loneliness, 1952*

Dorothy Day

I was surprised that I found myself beginning to pray daily. I could not get down on my knees, but I could pray while I was walking. If I got down on my knees I thought, ‘Do I really believe? Whom am I praying to?’ A terrible doubt came over me, and a sense of shame, and I wondered if I was praying because I was lonely, because I was unhappy.

But when I walked to the village for the mail, I found myself praying again, holding in my pocket the rosary that Mary Gordon gave me in New Orleans some years before. Maybe I did not say it correctly, but I kept on saying it because it made me happy.

Then I thought scornfully, ‘Here you are in a stupor of content. You are biological. Like a cow. Prayer with you is like the opiate of the people.’ And over and over again in my mind that phrase was repeatedly jeeringly, ‘Religion is the opiate of the people.’

‘But’ I reasoned with myself, ‘I am praying because I am happy, not because I am unhappy, I do not turn to God in unhappiness, in grief, in despair—to get consolation, to get something from Him.’

And encouraged that I was praying because I wanted to thank Him, I went on praying. No matter how dull the day, how long the walk seemed, if I felt sluggish at the beginning of the walk, the words I had been saying insinuated themselves into my heart before I had finished, so that on the trip back I neither prayed nor thought but was filled with exultation.

Along the beach I found it appropriate to say the *Te Deum*. When I worked about the house, I found myself addressing the Blessed Virgin and turning toward her statue.

Session 1

V

| *A Secular Age*, 2007

Charles Taylor

We all see our lives, and/or the space wherein we live our lives, as having a certain moral/spiritual shape. Somewhere, in some activity, or condition, lies a fullness, a richness; that is, in that place (activity or condition), life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be. This is perhaps a place of power: we often experience this as deeply moving, as inspiring. Perhaps this sense of fullness is something we just catch glimpses of from afar off; we have the powerful intuition of what fullness would be, were we to be in that condition, e.g., of peace or wholeness; or able to act on that level, of integrity or generosity or abandonment or self-forgetfulness. But sometimes there will be moments of experienced fullness, of joy and fulfillment, where we feel ourselves there. Let one example, drawn from the autobiography of Bede Griffiths¹, stand for many:

One day during my last term at school I walked out alone in the evening and heard the birds singing in that full chorus of song, which can only be heard at that time of the year at dawn or at sunset. I remember now the shock of surprise with which the sound broke on my ears. It seemed to me that I had never heard the birds singing before and I wondered whether they sang like this all year round and I had never noticed it. As I walked I came upon some hawthorn trees in full bloom and again I thought that I had never seen such a sight or experienced such sweetness before. If I had been brought suddenly among the trees of the Garden of Paradise and heard a choir of angels singing I could not have been more surprised. I came then to where the sun was setting over the playing fields. A lark rose suddenly from the ground beside the tree where I was standing and poured out its song above my head, and then sank still singing to rest. Everything then grew still as the sunset faded and the veil of dusk began to cover the earth. I remember now the feeling of awe which came over me. I felt inclined to kneel on the ground, as though I had been standing in the presence of an angel; and I hardly dared to look on the face of the sky, because it seemed as though it was but a veil before the face of God.

¹ Bede Griffiths went on to live out his life as a monk first in a Benedictine Abbey in England but then eventually in India where he brought together Hindu and Catholic spiritual practices

In this case, the sense of fullness came in an experience which unsettles and breaks through our ordinary sense of being in the world, with its familiar objects, activities and points of reference. These may be moments, as Peter Berger puts it, describing the work of Robert Musil, when "ordinary reality is 'abolished' and something terrifyingly *other* shines through", a state of consciousness which Musil describes as "der andere Zustand" (the other condition).

But the identification of fullness may happen without a limit experience of this kind, whether uplifting or frightening. There may just be moments when the deep divisions, distractions, worries, sadnesses that seem to drag us down are somehow dissolved, or brought into alignment, so that we feel united, moving forward, suddenly capable and full of energy. Our highest aspirations and our life energies are somehow lined up, reinforcing each other, instead of producing psychic gridlock. This is the kind of experience which Schiller tried to understand with his notion of "play".

These experiences, and others again which can't all be enumerated here, help us to situate a place of fullness, to which we orient ourselves morally or spiritually. They can orient us because they offer some sense of what they are of: the presence of God, or the voice of nature, or the force which flows through everything, or the alignment in us of desire and the drive to form. But they are also often unsettling and enigmatic. Our sense of where they come from may also be unclear, confused, lacunary. We are deeply moved, but also puzzled and shaken. We struggle to articulate what we've been through. If we succeed in formulating it, however partially, we feel a release, as though the power of the experience was increased by having been focused, articulated, and hence letfully be.

This can help define a direction to our lives. But the sense of orientation also has its negative slope; where we experience above all a distance, an absence, an exile, a seemingly irremediable incapacity ever to reach this place; an absence of power; a confusion, or worse, the condition often described in the tradition as melancholy, ennui (the "spleen" of Baudelaire). What is terrible in this latter condition is that we lose a sense of where the place of fullness is, even of what fullness could consist in; we feel we've forgotten what it would look like, or cannot believe in it anymore. But the misery of absence, of loss, is still there, indeed, it is in some ways even more acute.

There are other figures of exile, which we can see in the tradition, where what dominates is a sense of damnation, of deserved and decided exclusion forever from fullness; or images of captivity, within hideous forms which embody the very negation of fullness: the monstrous animal forms that we see in the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, for instance.

Then thirdly, there is a kind of stabilized middle condition, to which we often aspire. This is one where we have found a way to escape the forms of negation, exile, emptiness, without having reached fullness. We come to terms with the middle position, often through some stable, even routine order in life, in which we are doing things which have some meaning for us; for instance, which contribute to our ordinary happiness, or which are fulfilling in various ways, or which contribute to what we conceive of as the good. Or often, in the best scenario, all three: for instance, we strive to live happily with spouse and children, while practising a vocation which we find fulfilling, and also which constitutes an obvious

contribution to human welfare.

But it is essential to this middle condition, first that the routine, the order, the regular contact with meaning in our daily activities, somehow conjures, and keeps at bay the exile, or the ennui, or captivity in the monstrous; and second, that we have some sense of continuing contact with the place of fullness; and of slow movement towards it over the years. This place can't be renounced, or totally despaired of, without the equilibrium of the middle condition being undermined.

Here's where it might appear that my description of this supposedly general structure of our moral/spiritual lives tilts towards the believer. It is clear that the last sentences of the previous paragraph fit rather well the state of mind of the believer in the middle condition. She goes on placing faith in a fuller condition, often described as salvation, and can't despair of it, and also would want to feel that she is at least open to progress towards it, if not already taking small steps thither.

But there are surely many unbelievers for whom this life in what I've described as the "middle condition" is all there is. This is the goal. Living this well and fully is what human life is about — for instance, the threefold scenario I described above. This is all that human life offers; but on this view this is a) no small thing, and b) to believe that there is something more, e.g., after death, or in some impossible condition of sanctity, is to run away from and undermine the search for this human excellence.

So describing fullness as another "place" from this middle condition may be misleading. And yet there is a structural analogy here. The unbeliever wants to be the kind of person for whom this life is fully satisfying, in which all of him can rejoice, in which his whole sense of fullness can find an adequate object. And he is not there yet. Either he's not really living the constitutive meanings in his life fully: he's not really happy in his marriage, or fulfilled in his job, or confident that this job really conduces to the benefit of humankind. Or else he is reasonably confident that he has the bases of all these, but contrary to his express view, cannot find the fullness of peace and a sense of satisfaction and completeness in this life. In other words, there is something he aspires to beyond where he's at. He perhaps hasn't yet fully conquered the nostalgia for something transcendent. In one way or another, he still has some way to go. And that's the point behind this image of place, even though this place isn't "other" in the obvious sense of involving quite different activities, or a condition beyond this life.

Now the point of describing these typical dimensions of human moral/spiritual life as identifications of fullness, modes of exile, and types of the middle condition, is to allow us to understand better belief and unbelief as lived conditions, not just as theories or sets of beliefs subscribed to.

The big obvious contrast here is that for believers, the account of the place of fullness requires reference to God, that is, to something beyond human life and/or nature; where for unbelievers this is not the case; they rather will leave any account open, or understand fullness in terms of a potentiality of human beings understood naturalistically. But so far this description of the contrast seems to be still a belief description. What we need to do is to get a sense of the difference of lived experience.

Of course, this is incredibly various. But perhaps some recurring themes can be identified. For believers, often or typically, the sense is that fullness comes to them, that it is something they receive; moreover, receive in something like a personal relation, from another being capable of love and giving; approaching fullness involves among other things, practices of devotion and prayer (as well as charity, giving); and they are aware of being very far from the condition of full devotion and giving; they are aware of being self-enclosed, bound to lesser things and goals, not able to open themselves and receive/give as they would at the place of fullness. So there is the notion of receiving power or fullness in a relation; but the receiver isn't simply empowered in his/her present condition; he/she needs to be opened, transformed, brought out of self.

This is a very Christian formulation. In order to make the contrast with modern unbelief, perhaps it would be good to oppose to it another formulation, more "Buddhist": here the personal relation might drop out as central. But the emphasis would be all the stronger on the direction of transcending the self, opening it out, receiving a power that goes beyond us.

For modern unbelievers, the predicament is quite different. The power to reach fullness is within. There are different variations of this. One is that which centres on our nature as rational beings. The Kantian variant is the most upfront form of this. We have the power as rational agency to make the laws by which we live. This is something so greatly superior to the force of mere nature in us, in the form of desire, that when we contemplate it without distortion, we cannot but feel reverence (*Achtung*) for this power. The place of fullness is where we manage finally to give this power full reign, and so to live by it. We have a feeling of receptivity, when with our full sense of our own fragility and pathos as desiring beings, we look up to the power of law-giving with admiration and awe. But this doesn't in the end mean that there is any reception from outside; the power is within; and the more we realize this power, the more we become aware that it is within, that morality must be autonomous and not heteronomous.

Of course, there are also lots of more naturalistic variants of the power of reason... but within this kind of naturalism, we often find an admiration for the power of cool, disengaged reason, capable of contemplating the world and human life without illusion, and of acting lucidly for the best in the interest of human flourishing. A certain awe still surrounds reason as a critical power, capable of liberating us from illusion and blind forces of instinct, as well as the phantasies bred of our fear and narrowness and pusillanimity. The nearest thing to fullness lies in this power of reason, and it is entirely ours, developed if it is through our own, often heroic action. (And here the giants of modern "scientific" reason are often named: Copernicus, Darwin, Freud.)

Indeed, this sense of ourselves as beings both frail and courageous, capable of facing a meaningless, hostile universe without faintness of heart, and of rising to the challenge of devising our own rules of life, can be an inspiring one, as we see in the writings of a Camus for instance. ¹¹ Rising fully to this challenge, empowered by this sense of our own greatness in doing so, this condition we aspire to but only rarely, if ever, achieve, can function as its own place of fullness, in the sense of my discussion here.

Over against these modes of rejoicing in the self-sufficient power of reason, there are

other modes of unbelief which, analogous to religious views, see us as needing to receive power from elsewhere than autonomous reason to achieve fullness. Reason by itself is narrow, blind to the demands of fullness, will run on perhaps to destruction, human and ecological, if it recognizes no limits; is perhaps actuated by a kind of pride, hubris. There are often echoes here of a religious critique of modern, disengaged, unbelieving reason. Except that the sources of power are not transcendent. They are to be found in Nature, or in our own inner depths, or in both. We can recognize here theories of immanence which emerge from the Romantic critique of disengaged reason, and most notably certain ecological ethics of our day, particularly deep ecology. Rational mind has to open itself to something deeper and fuller. This is something (at least partly) inner; our own deepest feelings or instincts. We have therefore to heal the division within us that disengaged reason has created, setting thinking in opposition to feeling or instinct or intuition.

So we have- here views which, as just mentioned, have certain analogies to the [10] religious reaction to the unbelieving Enlightenment, in that they stress reception over against self-sufficiency; but they are views which intend to remain immanent, and are often as hostile, if not more so, to religion than the disengaged ones.

There is a third category of outlook, which is hard to classify here, but which I hope to illuminate later in this discussion. These are views, like that of certain contemporary modes of post-modernism, which deny, attack or scoff at the claims of self-sufficient reason, but offer no outside source for the reception of power. They are as determined to undermine and deny Romantic notions of solace in feeling, or in recovered unity, as they are to attack the Enlightenment dream of pure thinking; and they seem often even more eager to underscore their atheist convictions. They want to make a point of stressing the irremediable nature of division, lack of centre, the perpetual absence of fullness; which is at best a necessary dream, something we may have to suppose to make minimum sense of our world, but which is always elsewhere, and which couldn't in principle ever be found.

This family of views seems to stand altogether outside the structures I'm talking about here. And yet I think one can show that in a number of ways it draws on them. In particular, it draws empowerment from the sense of our courage and greatness in being able to face the irremediable, and carry on nonetheless. I hope to come back to this later.

So we've made some progress in talking about belief and unbelief as ways of living or experiencing moral/spiritual life, in the three dimensions I talked about earlier. At least I drew some contrasts in the first dimension, the way of experiencing fullness; the source of the power which can bring us to this fullness; whether this is "within" or "without"; and in what sense. Corresponding differences follow about experiences of exile, and those of the middle condition.

More needs to be said about this distinction of within/without, but before elaborating further on this, there is another important facet of this experience of fullness as "placed" somewhere which we need to explore. We have gone beyond mere belief, and are closer to lived experience here, but there are still important differences in the way we live it which have to be brought out.

What does it mean to say that for me fullness comes from a power which is beyond me, that I have to receive it, etc.? Today, it is likely to mean something like this: the best sense I can make of my conflicting moral and spiritual experience is captured by a theological view of this kind. That is, in my own experience, in prayer, in moments of fullness, in experiences of exile overcome, in what I seem to observe around me in other people's lives — lives of exceptional spiritual fullness, or lives of maximum self-enclosedness, lives of demonic evil, etc. — this seems to be the picture which emerges. But I am never, or only rarely, really sure, free of all doubt, untroubled by some objection — some experience which won't fit, some lives [11] which exhibit fullness on another basis, some alternative mode of fullness which sometimes draws me, etc.

This is typical of the modern condition, and an analogous story could be told by many an unbeliever. We live in a condition where we cannot help but be aware that there are a number of different construals, views which intelligent, reasonably undeluded people, of good will, can and do disagree on. We cannot help looking over our shoulder from time to time, looking sideways, living our faith also in a condition of doubt and uncertainty.

It is this index of doubt, which induces people to speak of "theories" here. Because theories are often hypotheses, held in ultimate uncertainty, pending further evidence. I hope I have said something to show that we can't understand them as mere theories, that there is a way in which our whole experience is inflected if we live in one or another spirituality. But all the same we are aware today that one can live the spiritual life differently; that power, fullness, exile, etc., can take different shapes.

But there is clearly another way one can live these things, and many human beings did. This is a condition in which the immediate experience of power, a place of fullness, exile, is in terms which we would identify as one of the possible alternatives, but where for the people concerned no such distinction, between experience and its construal, arose. Let's recur to Hieronymus Bosch for instance. Those nightmare scenarios of possession, of evil spirits, of captivation in monstrous animal forms; we can imagine that these were not "theories" in any sense in the lived experience of many people in that age. They were objects of real fear, of such compelling fear, that it wasn't possible to entertain seriously the idea that they might be unreal. You or people you knew had experienced them. And perhaps no one in your milieu ever got around even to suggesting their unreality.

Analogously, the people of New Testament Palestine, when they saw someone possessed of an evil spirit, were too immediately at grips with the real suffering of this condition, in a neighbour, or a loved one, to be able to entertain the idea that this was an interesting explanation for a psychological condition, identifiable purely in intra-psychic terms, but that there were other, possibly more reliable aetiologies for this condition.

So there is a condition of lived experience, where what we might call a construal of the moral/spiritual is lived not as such, but as immediate reality, like stones, rivers and mountains. And this plainly also goes for the positive side of things: e.g., people in earlier ages of our culture, for whom moving to fullness just meant getting closer to God. The alternatives they faced in life were: living a fuller devotion, or going on living for lesser goods, at a continuing distance from fullness; being "dévot" or "mondain", in the terms of seventeenth-century France; not taking off after a different construal of what fullness might mean.

Session 1

VI

| *“The Tropics In New York”, 1922*

A Poem by Claude McKay

Bananas ripe and green, and ginger-root,
Cocoa in pods and alligator pears,
And tangerines and mangoes and grape fruit,
Fit for the highest prize at parish fairs,
Set in the window, bringing memories
Of fruit-trees laden by low-singing rills,
And dewy dawns, and mystical blue skies
In benediction over nun-like hills.

My eyes grew dim, and I could no more gaze;
A wave of longing through my body swept,
And, hungry for the old, familiar ways,
I turned aside and bowed my head and wept.

Session 1

VII

| *Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 5, 1603*

A Poem by Shakespeare

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing

‘What is the good of the human person?’

- *What does it mean that God made us and that God searches and knows us?*
- *Why cannot the human soul live without love? What does it mean to say the soul is ‘made of love’?*
- *What is the vision of the human person offered in Gaudium et Spes? How is it different than other contemporary visions?*
- *Why is being made in the image of God so important?*
- *Why is the person so central to Catholicism?*
- *Why is community so essential to being a human person?*

Session 2

I

| Psalm 139

Psalm 139's traditional Latin title is "Domine probasti me et cognovisti me." It is a profound reflection on the relation of humanity to God, of Israel to God, and of the Church to God. You may be surprised by the language of 'hate' near the end of the Psalm. Figures like St. Augustine and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. interpreted this kind of 'perfect' hatred as the desire that people will turn from evil and towards God.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from afar.
3 You search out my path and my lying down
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
 behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
5 You hem me in, behind and before,
 and lay your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is high; I cannot attain it.
7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?
 Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
 If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
 and the light about me be night,"
12 even the darkness is not dark to you;
 the night is bright as the day,
 for darkness is as light with you.
13 For you formed my inward parts;
 you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.^[a]
Wonderful are your works;
 my soul knows it very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

18 If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.

19 Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!
O men of blood, depart from me!

20 They speak against you with malicious intent;
your enemies take your name in vain.^[b]

21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?

22 I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!^[c]

24 And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!^[d]

Session 2

II

| *Dialogues, 1347-1380*

St. Catherine of Siena

The soul cannot live without love, but always wants to love something, because she is made of love, and, by love, I created her. And therefore I told you that the affection moved the intellect, saying, as it were, 'I will love, because the food on which I feed is love.' Then the intellect, feeling itself awakened by the affection, says, as it were, 'If you will love, I will give you that which you can love.' And at once it arises, considering carefully the dignity of the soul, and the indignity into which she has fallen through sin. In the dignity of her being it tastes My inestimable goodness, and the infinite charity with which I created her, and, in contemplating her misery, it discovers and tastes My mercy, and sees how, through mercy, I have lent her time and drawn her out of darkness.

Session 2

III

Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, 1965

Gaudium et Spes (1965) is a document of the Second Vatican Council that provides guidance for Catholics living in the modern world but also seeks to speak to all humans about the question of the human person especially regarding what the good of the human person is in their full integrated humanity.

CHAPTER 1: THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

12. According to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, all things on earth should be related to man as their center and crown.

But what is man? About himself he has expressed, and continues to express, many divergent and even contradictory opinions. In these he often exalts himself as the absolute measure of all things or debases himself to the point of despair. The result is doubt and anxiety. The Church certainly understands these problems. Endowed with light from God, she can offer solutions to them, so that man's true situation can be portrayed and his defects explained, while at the same time his dignity and destiny are justly acknowledged.

For Sacred Scripture teaches that man was created "to the image of God," is capable of knowing and loving his Creator, and was appointed by Him as master of all earthly creatures that he might subdue them and use them to God's glory. "What is man that you should care for him? You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet" (Ps. 8:5-7).

But God did not create man as a solitary, for from the beginning "male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). Their companionship produces the primary form of interpersonal communion. For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential. Therefore, as we read elsewhere in Holy Scripture God saw "all that he had made, and it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).

13. Although he was made by God in a state of holiness, from the very onset of his history man abused his liberty, at the urging of the Evil One. Man set himself against God and sought to attain his goal apart from God. Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, but their senseless minds were darkened and they served the creature rather than the Creator. What divine revelation makes known to us agrees with experience. Examining his heart, man finds that he has inclinations toward evil too, and is engulfed by manifold ills which cannot come from his good Creator. Often refusing to acknowledge God as his beginning, man has disrupted also his proper relationship to his own ultimate goal as well as his whole relationship toward himself and others and all created things.

Therefore man is split within himself. As a result, all of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and

darkness. Indeed, man finds that by himself he is incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully, so that everyone feels as though he is bound by chains. But the Lord Himself came to free and strengthen man, renewing him inwardly and casting out that "prince of this world" (John 12:31) who held him in the bondage of sin. For sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment.

The call to grandeur and the depths of misery, both of which are a part of human experience, find their ultimate and simultaneous explanation in the light of this revelation.

14. Though made of body and soul, man is one. Through his bodily composition he gathers to himself the elements of the material world; thus they reach their crown through him, and through him raise their voice in free praise of the Creator. For this reason man is not allowed to despise his bodily life, rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and honorable since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day. Nevertheless, wounded by sin, man experiences rebellious stirrings in his body. But the very dignity of man postulates that man glorify God in his body and forbid it to serve the evil inclinations of his heart.

Now, man is not wrong when he regards himself as superior to bodily concerns, and as more than a speck of nature or a nameless constituent of the city of man. For by his interior qualities he outstrips the whole sum of mere things. He plunges into the depths of reality whenever he enters into his own heart; God, Who probes the heart, awaits him there; there he discerns his proper destiny beneath the eyes of God. Thus, when he recognizes in himself a spiritual and immortal soul, he is not being mocked by a fantasy born only of physical or social influences, but is rather laying hold of the proper truth of the matter.

15. Man judges rightly that by his intellect he surpasses the material universe, for he shares in the light of the divine mind. By relentlessly employing his talents through the ages he has indeed made progress in the practical sciences and in technology and the liberal arts. In our times he has won superlative victories, especially in his probing of the material world and in subjecting it to himself. Still he has always searched for more penetrating truths, and finds them. For his intelligence is not confined to observable data alone, but can with genuine certitude attain to reality itself as knowable, though in consequence of sin that certitude is partly obscured and weakened.

The intellectual nature of the human person is perfected by wisdom and needs to be, for wisdom gently attracts the mind of man to a quest and a love for what is true and good. Steeped in wisdom, man passes through visible realities to those which are unseen.

Our era needs such wisdom more than bygone ages if the discoveries made by man are to be further humanized. For the future of the world stands in peril unless wiser men are forthcoming. It should also be pointed out that many nations, poorer in economic goods, are quite rich in wisdom and can offer noteworthy advantages to others.

It is, finally, through the gift of the Holy Spirit that man comes by faith to the contemplation and appreciation of the divine plan.

16. In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that

law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbor. In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals from social relationships. Hence the more right conscience holds sway, the more persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and strive to be guided by the objective norms of morality. Conscience frequently errs from invincible ignorance without losing its dignity. The same cannot be said for a man who cares but little for truth and goodness, or for a conscience which by degrees grows practically sightless as a result of habitual sin.

17. Only in freedom can man direct himself toward goodness. Our contemporaries make much of this freedom and pursue it eagerly; and rightly to be sure. Often however they foster it perversely as a license for doing whatever pleases them, even if it is evil. For its part, authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within man. For God has willed that man remain "under the control of his own decisions," so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure. Man achieves such dignity when, emancipating himself from all captivity to passion, he pursues his goal in a spontaneous choice of what is good, and procures for himself through effective and skilful action, apt helps to that end. Since man's freedom has been damaged by sin, only by the aid of God's grace can he bring such a relationship with God into full flower. Before the judgement seat of God each man must render an account of his own life, whether he has done good or evil.

18. It is in the face of death that the riddle a human existence grows most acute. Not only is man tormented by pain and by the advancing deterioration of his body, but even more so by a dread of perpetual extinction. He rightly follows the intuition of his heart when he abhors and repudiates the utter ruin and total disappearance of his own person. He rebels against death because he bears in himself an eternal seed which cannot be reduced to sheer matter. All the endeavors of technology, though useful in the extreme, cannot calm his anxiety; for prolongation of biological life is unable to satisfy that desire for higher life which is inescapably lodged in his breast.

Although the mystery of death utterly beggars the imagination, the Church has been taught by divine revelation and firmly teaches that man has been created by God for a blissful purpose beyond the reach of earthly misery. In addition, that bodily death from which man would have been immune had he not sinned will be vanquished, according to the Christian faith, when man who was ruined by his own doing is restored to wholeness by an almighty and merciful Saviour. For God has called man and still calls him so that with his entire being he might be joined to Him in an endless sharing of a divine life beyond all corruption. Christ won this victory when He rose to life, for by His death He freed man from death. Hence to every thoughtful man a solidly established faith provides the answer to his anxiety about what the future holds for him. At the same time faith gives him the power to be united in Christ with his loved ones who have already been snatched away by death; faith arouses the hope that they have found true life with God.

19. The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His

Creator. Still, many of our contemporaries have never recognized this intimate and vital link with God, or have explicitly rejected it. Thus atheism must be accounted among the most serious problems of this age, and is deserving of closer examination.

The word atheism is applied to phenomena which are quite distinct from one another. For while God is expressly denied by some, others believe that man can assert absolutely nothing about Him. Still others use such a method to scrutinize the question of God as to make it seem devoid of meaning. Many, unduly transgressing the limits of the positive sciences, contend that everything can be explained by this kind of scientific reasoning alone, or by contrast, they altogether disallow that there is any absolute truth. Some laud man so extravagantly that their faith in God lapses into a kind of anemia, though they seem more inclined to affirm man than to deny God. Again some form for themselves such a fallacious idea of God that when they repudiate this figment they are by no means rejecting the God of the Gospel. Some never get to the point of raising questions about God, since they seem to experience no religious stirrings nor do they see why they should trouble themselves about religion. Moreover, atheism results not rarely from a violent protest against the evil in this world, or from the absolute character with which certain human values are unduly invested, and which thereby already accords them the stature of God. Modern civilization itself often complicates the approach to God not for any essential reason but because it is so heavily engrossed in earthly affairs.

Undeniably, those who willfully shut out God from their hearts and try to dodge religious questions are not following the dictates of their consciences, and hence are not free of blame; yet believers themselves frequently bear some responsibility for this situation. For, taken as a whole, atheism is not a spontaneous development but stems from a variety of causes, including a critical reaction against religious beliefs, and in some places against the Christian religion in particular. Hence believers can have more than a little to do with the birth of atheism. To the extent that they neglect their own training in the faith, or teach erroneous doctrine, or are deficient in their religious, moral or social life, they must be said to conceal rather than reveal the authentic face of God and religion.

20. Modern atheism often takes on a systematic expression which, in addition to other causes, stretches the desires for human independence to such a point that it poses difficulties against any kind of dependence on God. Those who profess atheism of this sort maintain that it gives man freedom to be an end unto himself, the sole artisan and creator of his own history. They claim that this freedom cannot be reconciled with the affirmation of a Lord Who is author and purpose of all things, or at least that this freedom makes such an affirmation altogether superfluous. Favoring this doctrine can be the sense of power which modern technical progress generates in man.

Not to be overlooked among the forms of modern atheism is that which anticipates the liberation of man especially through his economic and social emancipation. This form argues that by its nature religion thwarts this liberation by arousing man's hope for a deceptive future life, thereby diverting him from the constructing of the earthly city. Consequently when the proponents of this doctrine gain governmental power they vigorously fight against religion, and promote atheism by using, especially in the education of youth, those means of pressure which public power has at its disposal.

21. In her loyal devotion to God and men, the Church has already repudiated and cannot cease repudiating, sorrowfully but as firmly as possible, those poisonous doctrines and actions which contradict reason and the common experience of humanity, and dethrone

man from his native excellence.

Still, she strives to detect in the atheistic mind the hidden causes for the denial of God; conscious of how weighty are the questions which atheism raises, and motivated by love for all men, she believes these questions ought to be examined seriously and more profoundly.

The Church holds that the recognition of God is in no way hostile to man's dignity, since this dignity is rooted and perfected in God. For man was made an intelligent and free member of society by God Who created him, but even more important, he is called as a son to commune with God and share in His happiness. She further teaches that a hope related to the end of time does not diminish the importance of intervening duties but rather undergirds the acquittal of them with fresh incentives. By contrast, when a divine instruction and the hope of life eternal are wanting, man's dignity is most grievously lacerated, as current events often attest; riddles of life and death, of guilt and of grief go unsolved with the frequent result that men succumb to despair.

Meanwhile every man remains to himself an unsolved puzzle, however obscurely he may perceive it. For on certain occasions no one can entirely escape the kind of self-questioning mentioned earlier, especially when life's major events take place. To this questioning only God fully and most certainly provides an answer as He summons man to higher knowledge and humbler probing.

The remedy which must be applied to atheism, however, is to be sought in a proper presentation of the Church's teaching as well as in the integral life of the Church and her members. For it is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit Who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and His Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible. This result is achieved chiefly by the witness of a living and mature faith, namely, one trained to see difficulties clearly and to master them. Many martyrs have given luminous witness to this faith and continue to do so. This faith needs to prove its fruitfulness by penetrating the believer's entire life, including its worldly dimensions, and by activating him toward justice and love, especially regarding the needy. What does the most reveal God's presence, however, is the brotherly charity of the faithful who are united in spirit as they work together for the faith of the Gospel and who prove themselves a sign of unity.

While rejecting atheism, root and branch, the Church sincerely professes that all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live; such an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue. Hence the Church protests against the distinction which some state authorities make between believers and unbelievers, with prejudice to the fundamental rights of the human person. The Church calls for the active liberty of believers to build up in this world God's temple too. She courteously invites atheists to examine the Gospel of Christ with an open mind.

Above all the Church knows that her message is in harmony with the most secret desires of the human heart when she champions the dignity of the human vocation, restoring hope to those who have already despaired of anything higher than their present lot. Far from diminishing man, her message brings to his development light, life and freedom. Apart from this message nothing will avail to fill up the heart of man: "Thou hast made us for Thyself," O Lord, "and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

22. The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man

take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown.

He Who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), is Himself the perfect man. To the sons of Adam He restores the divine likeness which had been disfigured from the first sin onward. Since human nature as He assumed it was not annulled, by that very fact it has been raised up to a divine dignity in our respect too. For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin.

As an innocent lamb He merited for us life by the free shedding of His own blood. In Him God reconciled us to Himself and among ourselves; from bondage to the devil and sin He delivered us, so that each one of us can say with the Apostle: The Son of God "loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). By suffering for us He not only provided us with an example for our imitation, He blazed a trail, and if we follow it, life and death are made holy and take on a new meaning.

The Christian man, conformed to the likeness of that Son Who is the firstborn of many brothers, received "the first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23) by which he becomes capable of discharging the new law of love. Through this Spirit, who is "the pledge of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:14), the whole man is renewed from within, even to the achievement of "the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23): "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the death dwells in you, then he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom. 8:11). Pressing upon the Christian to be sure, are the need and the duty to battle against evil through manifold tribulations and even to suffer death. But, linked with the paschal mystery and patterned on the dying Christ, he will hasten forward to resurrection in the strength which comes from hope.

All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.

Such is the mystery of man, and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us. Christ has risen, destroying death by His death; He has lavished life upon us so that, as sons in the Son, we can cry out in the Spirit; Abba, Father

CHAPTER 2: THE COMMUNITY OF MANKIND

23. One of the salient features of the modern world is the growing interdependence of men one on the other, a development promoted chiefly by modern technical advances. Nevertheless brotherly dialogue among men does not reach its perfection on the level of technical progress, but on the deeper level of interpersonal relationships. These demand a mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of the person. Christian revelation contributes greatly to the promotion of this communion between persons, and at the same time leads us

to a deeper understanding of the laws of social life which the Creator has written into man's moral and spiritual nature.

Since rather recent documents of the Church's teaching authority have dealt at considerable length with Christian doctrine about human society, this council is merely going to call to mind some of the more basic truths, treating their foundations under the light of revelation. Then it will dwell more at length on certain of their implications having special significance for our day.

24. God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who "from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself.

For this reason, love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: "If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.... Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law" (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20). To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance.

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, "that all may be one. . . as we are one" (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.

25. Man's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on one another. For the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life. Since this social life is not something added on to man, through his dealings with others, through reciprocal duties, and through fraternal dialogue he develops all his gifts and is able to rise to his destiny.

Among those social ties which man needs for his development some, like the family and political community, relate with greater immediacy to his innermost nature; others originate rather from his free decision. In our era, for various reasons, reciprocal ties and mutual dependencies increase day by day and give rise to a variety of associations and organizations, both public and private. This development, which is called socialization, while certainly not without its dangers, brings with it many advantages with respect to consolidating and increasing the qualities of the human person, and safeguarding his rights.

But if by this social life the human person is greatly aided in responding to his destiny, even in its religious dimensions, it cannot be denied that men are often diverted from doing good and spurred toward and by the social circumstances in which they live and are immersed from their birth. To be sure the disturbances which so frequently occur in the social order result in part from the natural tensions of economic, political and social forms. But at a deeper level they flow from man's pride and selfishness, which contaminate even the social sphere. When the structure of affairs is flawed by the consequences of sin, man, already born with a bent toward evil, finds there new inducements to sin, which cannot be overcome without strenuous efforts and the assistance of grace.

26. Every day human interdependence grows more tightly drawn and spreads by degrees over the whole world. As a result the common good, that is, the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. Every social group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family.

At the same time, however, there is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person, since he stands above all things, and his rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom even in matters religious.

Hence, the social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person if the disposition of affairs is to be subordinate to the personal realm and not contrariwise, as the Lord indicated when He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

This social order requires constant improvement. It must be founded on truth, built on justice and animated by love; in freedom it should grow every day toward a more humane balance. An improvement in attitudes and abundant changes in society will have to take place if these objectives are to be gained.

God's Spirit, Who with a marvelous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, is not absent from this development. The ferment of the Gospel too has aroused and continues to arouse in man's heart the irresistible requirements of his dignity.

27. Coming down to practical and particularly urgent consequences, this council lays stress on reverence for man; everyone must consider his every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all His life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus.

In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of every person without exception and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign laborer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord, "As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me" (Matt. 25:40).

Furthermore, whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are supreme dishonor to the Creator.

28. Respect and love ought to be extended also to those who think or act differently than we

do in social, political and even religious matters. In fact, the more deeply we come to understand their ways of thinking through such courtesy and love, the more easily will we be able to enter into dialogue with them.

This love and good will, to be sure, must in no way render us indifferent to truth and goodness. Indeed love itself impels the disciples of Christ to speak the saving truth to all men. But it is necessary to distinguish between error, which always merits repudiation, and the person in error, who never loses the dignity of being a person even when he is flawed by false or inadequate religious notions. God alone is the judge and searcher of hearts, for that reason He forbids us to make judgments about the internal guilt of anyone.

The teaching of Christ even requires that we forgive injuries, and extends the law of love to include every enemy, according to the command of the New Law: "You have heard that it was said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I say to you: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you" (Matt. 5:43-44).

29. Since all men possess a rational soul and are created in God's likeness, since they have the same nature and origin, have been redeemed by Christ and enjoy the same divine calling and destiny, the basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition.

True, all men are not alike from the point of view of varying physical power and the diversity of intellectual and moral resources. Nevertheless, with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. For in truth it must still be regretted that fundamental personal rights are still not being universally honored. Such is the case of a woman who is denied the right to choose a husband freely, to embrace a state of life or to acquire an education or cultural benefits equal to those recognized for men.

Therefore, although rightful differences exist between men, the equal dignity of persons demands that a more humane and just condition of life be brought about. For excessive economic and social differences between the members of the one human family or population groups cause scandal, and militate against social justice, equity, the dignity of the human person, as well as social and international peace.

Human institutions, both private and public, must labor to minister to the dignity and purpose of man. At the same time let them put up a stubborn fight against any kind of slavery, whether social or political, and safeguard the basic rights of man under every political system. Indeed human institutions themselves must be accommodated by degrees to the highest of all realities, spiritual ones, even though meanwhile, a long enough time will be required before they arrive at the desired goal.

30. Profound and rapid changes make it more necessary that no one ignoring the trend of events or drugged by laziness, content himself with a merely individualistic morality. It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life. Yet there are those who, while possessing grand and rather noble sentiments, nevertheless in reality live always as if they cared nothing for the needs of society. Many in various places even make light of social laws and precepts, and do not hesitate to resort to various frauds and deceptions in avoiding just taxes or other debts due

to society. Others think little of certain norms of social life, for example those designed for the protection of health, or laws establishing speed limits; they do not even avert to the fact that by such indifference they imperil their own life and that of others.

Let everyone consider it his sacred obligation to esteem and observe social necessities as belonging to the primary duties of modern man. For the more unified the world becomes, the more plainly do the offices of men extend beyond particular groups and spread by degrees to the whole world. But this development cannot occur unless individual men and their associations cultivate in themselves the moral and social virtues, and promote them in society; thus, with the needed help of divine grace men who are truly new and artisans of a new humanity can be forthcoming

31. In order for individual men to discharge with greater exactness the obligations of their conscience toward themselves and the various group to which they belong, they must be carefully educated to a higher degree of culture through the use of the immense resources available today to the human race. Above all the education of youth from every social background has to be undertaken, so that there can be produced not only men and women of refined talents, but those great-souled persons who are so desperately required by our times.

Now a man can scarcely arrive at the needed sense of responsibility, unless his living conditions allow him to become conscious of his dignity, and to rise to his destiny by spending himself for God and for others. But human freedom is often crippled when a man encounters extreme poverty just as it withers when he indulges in too many of life's comforts and imprisons himself in a kind of splendid isolation. Freedom acquires new strength, by contrast, when a man consents to the unavoidable requirements of social life, takes on the manifold demands of human partnership, and commits himself to the service of the human community.

Hence, the will to play one's role in common endeavors should be everywhere encouraged. Praise is due to those national procedures which allow the largest possible number of citizens to participate in public affairs with genuine freedom. Account must be taken, to be sure, of the actual conditions of each people and the decisiveness required by public authority. If every citizen is to feel inclined to take part in the activities of the various groups which make up the social body, these must offer advantages which will attract members and dispose them to serve others. We can justly consider that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping.

32. As God did not create man for life in isolation, but for the formation of social unity, so also "it has pleased God to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals, without bond or link between them, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness." So from the beginning of salvation history He has chosen men not just as individuals but as members of a certain community. Revealing His mind to them, God called these chosen ones "His people" (Ex. 3:7-12), and even made a covenant with them on Sinai.

This communitarian character is developed and consummated in the work of Jesus Christ. For the very Word made flesh willed to share in the human fellowship. He was present at the wedding of Cana, visited the house of Zacchaeus, ate with publicans and sinners. He revealed the love of the Father and the sublime vocation of man in terms of the most

common of social realities and by making use of the speech and the imagery of plain everyday life. Willingly obeying' the laws of his country He sanctified those human ties, especially family ones, which are the source of social structures. He chose to lead the life proper to an artisan of His time and place.

In His preaching He clearly taught the sons of God to treat one another as brothers. In His prayers He pleaded that all His disciples might be "one." Indeed as the redeemer of all, He offered Himself for all even to point of death. "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). He commanded His Apostles to preach to all peoples the Gospel's message that the human race was to become the Family of God, in which the fullness of the Law would be love.

As the firstborn of many brethren and by the giving of His Spirit, He founded after His death and resurrection a new brotherly community composed of all those who receive Him in faith and in love. This He did through His Body, which is the Church. There everyone, as members one of the other, would render mutual service according to the different gifts bestowed on each.

This solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection. Then, saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their Brother.

'Pilgrims are we all'

Journeying, Seeking, Striving

- *What is the nature of a pilgrimage?*
- *What are the characteristics of a pilgrim?*
- *What motivates the pilgrim?*
- *What is the relationship between the Here and There? Between daily, ordinary living and the eternal for which we seek?*

"All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.

From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king."

-J.R.R Tolkien

Session 3

I

|

Psalm 121

1

A song of ascents.

I raise my eyes toward the mountains.

From whence shall come my help?

2

My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.

3

He will not allow your foot to slip;
or your guardian to sleep.

4

Behold, the guardian of Israel
never slumbers nor sleeps.

5

The Lord is your guardian;
the Lord is your shade
at your right hand.

6

By day the sun will not strike you,
nor the moon by night.

7

The Lord will guard you from all evil;
he will guard your soul.

8

The Lord will guard your coming and going
both now and forever.

Session 3

II

Pilgrim's Song (Wallfahrtslied), 1984

Arvo Pärt

After reading Psalm 121, listen to Arvo Pärt's *Pilgrim's Prayer/Song (Wallfahrtslied)*. Here are some words of introduction written by Arvo Pärt, the composer:

When my friend Grigori Kromanov, the Estonian film and stage director, died in July 1984, it was like a bolt from the blue. Suddenly an invisible rift had opened up between us – with me still on the side of time and him already in the sphere of timelessness.

My Pilgrims' Song is an attempt to overcome this insurmountable gap through a gentle touch, a greeting. I wanted the two worlds, Here and There, to merge in the music, as contrasting layers – that was the origin of the work.

On the one side, there is the dynamism and mobility of the orchestra – and on the other, the static quality of the men's voices, reduced to a single pitch, with the serenity of a mountain. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills...

Arvo Pärt

Take a listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XImcKFYIVQ>

Session 3

III

A Prayer, 1922

A Poem by Claude McKay

'Mid the discordant noises of the day I hear thee calling;
I stumble as I fare along Earth's way; keep me from falling.

Mine eyes are open but they cannot see for gloom of night:
I can no more than lift my heart to thee for inward light.

The wild and fiery passion of my youth consumes my soul;
In agony I turn to thee for truth and self-control.

For Passion and all the pleasures it can give will die the death;
But this of me eternally must live, thy borrowed breath.

'Mid the discordant noises of the day I hear thee calling;
I stumble as I fare along Earth's way; keep me from falling.

Session 3

IV

Catherine of Siena's Dialogue, 1347-1380

An Excerpt

THE BRIDGE

26

Then God eternal, to stir up even more that soul's love for the salvation of souls, responded to her:

Before I show you what I want to show you, and what you asked to see, I want to describe the bridge for you.¹ I have told you that it stretches from heaven to earth by reason of my having joined myself with your humanity, which I formed from the earth's clay.

This bridge, my only-begotten Son, has three stairs. Two of them he built on the wood of the most holy cross, and the third even as he tasted the great bitterness of the gall and vinegar they gave him to drink. You will recognize in these three stairs three spiritual stages.

The first stair is the feet, which symbolize the affections. For just as the feet carry the body, the affections carry the soul. My Son's nailed feet are a stair by which you can climb to his side, where you will see revealed his inmost heart.² For when the soul has climbed up on the feet of affection and looked with her mind's eye into my Son's opened heart, she begins to feel the love of her own heart in his consummate and unspeakable love. (I say consummate because it is not for his own good that he loves you; you cannot do him any good, since he is one with me.) Then the soul, seeing how tremendously she is loved, is herself filled to overflowing with love. So, having climbed the second stair, she reaches the third. This is his mouth, where she finds peace from the terrible war she has had to wage because of her sins.

1. The basic image of the bridge may well be drawn from Gregory the Great, but Catherine builds it up with a wealth of detail apparently original to her. She may have had in mind a bridge such as that she had seen spanning the River Arno in Florence, a walled bridge complete with shops along its sides.

2. Cf. A.M. Walz, "Il segreto del cuore di Criso nella spiritualità cateriniana," *Studii domenicani* (Rome, 1939).

THE DIALOGUE

At the first stair, lifting the feet of her affections from the earth, she stripped herself of sin. At the second she dressed herself in love for virtue. And at the third she tasted peace.

So the bridge has three stairs, and you can reach the last by climbing the first two. The last stair is so high that the flooding waters cannot strike it—for the venom of sin never touched my Son.³

But though this bridge has been raised so high, it still is joined to the earth. Do you know when it was raised up? When my Son was lifted up on the wood of the most holy cross he did not cut off his divinity from the lowly earth of your humanity. So though he was raised so high he was not raised off the earth. In fact, his divinity is kneaded into the clay of your humanity like one bread. Nor could anyone walk on that bridge until my Son was raised up. This is why he said, “If I am lifted up high I will draw everything to myself.”⁴

When my goodness saw that you could be drawn in no other way, I sent him to be lifted onto the wood of the cross. I made of that cross an anvil where this child of humankind could be hammered into an instrument to release humankind from death and restore it to the life of grace. In this way he drew everything to himself: for he proved his unspeakable love, and the human heart is always drawn by love. He could not have shown you greater love than by giving his life for you.⁵ You can hardly resist being drawn by love, then, unless you foolishly refuse to be drawn.

I said that, having been raised up, he would draw everything to himself. This is true in two ways: First, the human heart is drawn by love, as I said, and with all its powers: memory, understanding, and will. If these three powers are harmoniously united in my name, everything else you do, in fact or in intention, will be drawn to union with me in peace through the movement of love, because all will be lifted up in the pursuit of crucified love. So my Truth indeed spoke truly when he said, “If I am lifted up high, I will draw everything to myself.” For everything you do will be drawn to him when he draws your heart and its powers.

What he said is true also in the sense that everything was created for your use, to serve your needs. But you who have the gift of reason were made not for yourselves but for me, to serve me with all your

3. Cf. 1 Jn. 3:5.

4. Jn. 12:32.

5. Jn. 15:13.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

heart and all your love. So when you are drawn to me, everything is drawn with you, because everything was made for you.

It was necessary, then, that this bridge be raised high. And it had to have stairs so that you would be able to mount it more easily.

Session 3

V

| *On Pilgrimage, 1897-1980*

A Diary Excerpt from Dorothy Day

It is never too late to begin. It is never too late to turn over a new leaf. In spite of the atom bomb, the jet plane, the conflict with Russia, ten just men may still save the city.

Maybe if we keep on writing and talking, there will be other conversions like Mr. Hyde's. It was reading an article that got Father Damien his helper Brother Joseph, at Molokai. It was reading that converted St. Augustine. So we will keep on writing.

And talking, too. They always said in England that the Distributists did nothing but talk. But one needs to talk to convey ideas. St. Paul talked so much and so long that in the crowded room one young lad, sitting on the windowsill, fell out of the window and was killed like a woman down the street from us, last week. Only she was not listening to the word of God but washing windows on a Sunday morning. And it was sad that there was no St. Paul to bring her to life. Her life finished there. But we are still alive, though we live in a city of ten million, and one can scarcely call it life, and the papers every day carry news of new weapons of death.

However, we are still here. We are still marrying and having children, and having to feed them and house them and clothe them. We don't want them to grow up and say, "This city is such hell that perhaps war will be preferable. This working in a laundry, a brass factory, the kitchen of a restaurant, is hell on earth. At least war will teach me new trades, which the public school system has failed to do. This coming home at night to a four-room or a two-room tenement flat and a wife and three children with whooping cough (there are usually not more than three children in the city) is also hell." And what can be done about it? We are taught to suffer, to embrace the cross. On the other hand, St. Catherine said, "All the way to heaven is heaven, because He said, 'I am the Way.'" And He was a carpenter and wandered the roadsides of Palestine and lived in the fields and plucked the grain to eat on a Sunday as He wandered with His disciples.



Farm Garden with Crucifix by Gustav Klimt (1911)

‘How Do We Determine the Good on the Journey?’

- *What are our guides for moral life?*
- *Do we appeal to shared guidelines when arguing with others? To what extent is that significant? Why might our present culture reject the idea of moral universals and yet often appeal to moral principles anyway?*
- *What does Aquinas say is “natural” about “natural law”? In what ways does it make sense to speak of it as a “law” and in what ways does it not?*
- *When reflecting on the shape of our own moral lives, what are the advantages of thinking of virtue instead of law? And where does love fit into the equation?*
- *What is the role of “vocation” in a life well-lived? Is that a concept that can only be meaningful to Christians?*
- *What is the role of friendship and commitment on our moral pilgrimage?*

Session 4

I | Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe, *Mere Christianity*, 1952

C.S. Lewis

1. The Law Of Human Nature

Everyone has heard people quarrelling. Sometimes it sounds funny and sometimes it sounds merely unpleasant; but however it sounds, I believe we can learn something very important from listening to the kind of things they say. They say things like this: "How'd you like it if anyone did the same to you?"—"That's my seat, I was there first"—"Leave him alone, he isn't doing you any harm"—"Why should you shove in first?"—"Give me a bit of your orange, I gave you a bit of mine"—"Come on, you promised." People say things like that every day, educated people as well as uneducated, and children as well as grown-ups.

Now what interests me about all these remarks is that the man who makes them is not merely saying that the other man's behaviour does not happen to please him. He is appealing to some kind of standard of behaviour which he expects the other man to know about. And the other man very seldom replies: "To hell with your standard." Nearly always he tries to make out that what he has been doing does not really go against the standard, or that if it does there is some special excuse. He pretends there is some special reason in this particular case why the person who took the seat first should not keep it, or that things were quite different when he was given the bit of orange, or that something has turned up which lets him off keeping his promise.

It looks, in fact, very much as if both parties had in mind some kind of Law or Rule of fair play or decent behaviour or morality or whatever you like to call it, about which they really agreed. And they have. If they had not, they might, of course, fight like animals, but they could not quarrel in the human sense of the word. Quarrelling means trying to show that the other man is in the wrong. And there would be no sense in trying to do that unless you and he had some sort of agreement as to what Right and Wrong are; just as there would be no sense in saying that a footballer had committed a foul unless there was some agreement about the rules of football.

Now this Law or Rule about Right and Wrong used to be called the Law of Nature. Nowadays, when we talk of the "laws of nature" we usually mean things like gravitation, or heredity, or the laws of chemistry. But when the older thinkers called the Law of Right and Wrong "the Law of Nature," they really meant the Law of Human Nature. The idea was that, just as all bodies are governed by the law of gravitation and organisms by biological laws, so the creature called man also had his law—with this great difference, that a body

could not choose whether it obeyed the law of gravitation or not, but a man could choose either to obey the Law of Human Nature or to disobey it.

We may put this in another way. Each man is at every moment subjected to several different sets of law but there is only one of these which he is free to disobey. As a body, he is subjected to gravitation and cannot disobey it; if you leave him unsupported in mid-air, he has no more choice about falling than a stone has. As an organism, he is subjected to various biological laws which he cannot disobey any more than an animal can. That is, he cannot disobey those laws which he shares with other things; but the law which is peculiar to his human nature, the law he does not share with animals or vegetables or inorganic things, is the one he can disobey if he chooses.

This law was called the Law of Nature because people thought that everyone knew it by nature and did not need to be taught it. They did not mean, of course, that you might not find an odd individual here and there who did not know it, just as you find a few people who are colour-blind or have no ear for a tune. But taking the race as a whole, they thought that the human idea of decent behaviour was obvious to everyone. And I believe they were right. If they were not, then all the things we said about the war were nonsense. What was the sense in saying the enemy were in the wrong unless Right is a real thing which the Nazis at bottom knew as well as we did and ought to have practised? If they had had no notion of what we mean by right, then, though we might still have had to fight them, we could no more have blamed them for that than for the colour of their hair.

I know that some people say the idea of a Law of Nature or decent behaviour known to all men is unsound, because different civilisations and different ages have had quite different moralities.

But this is not true. There have been differences between their moralities, but these have never amounted to anything like a total difference. If anyone will take the trouble to compare the moral teaching of, say, the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Hindus, Chinese, Greeks and Romans, what will really strike him will be how very like they are to each other and to our own. Some of the evidence for this I have put together in the appendix of another book called *The Abolition of Man*; but for our present purpose I need only ask the reader to think what a totally different morality would mean. Think of a country where people were admired for running away in battle, or where a man felt proud of double-crossing all the people who had been kindest to him.

You might just as well try to imagine a country where two and two made five. Men have differed as regards what people you ought to be unselfish to—whether it was only your own family, or your fellow countrymen, or everyone. But they have always agreed that you ought not to put yourself first. Selfishness has never been admired. Men have differed as to whether you should have one wife or four. But they have always agreed that you must not simply have any woman you liked.

But the most remarkable thing is this. Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining "It's not fair" before you can say Jack Robinson. A nation may say treaties do not matter, but then, next minute, they spoil their case by saying that the particular treaty they want to break was an unfair one. But if treaties do not matter, and if there is no such thing as Right and Wrong—in other words, if there is no Law of Nature—what is the

difference between a fair treaty and an unfair one? Have they not let the cat out of the bag and shown that, whatever they say, they really know the Law of Nature just like anyone else?

It seems, then, we are forced to believe in a real Right and Wrong. People may be sometimes mistaken about them, just as people sometimes get their sums wrong; but they are not a matter of mere taste and opinion any more than the multiplication table. Now if we are agreed about that, I go on to my next point, which is this. None of us are really keeping the Law of Nature. If there are any exceptions among you, I apologise to them. They had much better read some other work, for nothing I am going to say concerns them. And now, turning to the ordinary human beings who are left:

I hope you will not misunderstand what I am going to say. I am not preaching, and Heaven knows I do not pretend to be better than anyone else. I am only trying to call attention to a fact; the fact that this

year, or this month, or, more likely, this very day, we have failed to practise ourselves the kind of behaviour we expect from other people. There may be all sorts of excuses for us. That time you were so unfair to the children was when you were very tired. That slightly shady business about the money—the one you have almost forgotten—came when you were very hard up. And what you promised to do for old So-and-so and have never done—well, you never would have promised if you had known how frightfully busy you were going to be. And as for your behaviour to your wife (or husband) or sister (or brother) if I knew how irritating they could be, I would not wonder at it—and who the dickens am I, anyway? I am just the same.

That is to say, I do not succeed in keeping the Law of Nature very well, and the moment anyone tells me I am not keeping it, there starts up in my mind a string of excuses as long as your arm. The question at the moment is not whether they are good excuses. The point is that they are one more proof of how deeply, whether we like it or not, we believe in the Law of Nature. If we do not believe in decent behaviour, why should we be so anxious to make excuses for not having behaved decently? The truth is, we believe in decency so much—we feel the Rule or Law pressing on us so—that we cannot bear to face the fact that we are breaking it, and consequently we try to shift the responsibility. For you notice that it is only for our bad behaviour that we find all these explanations.

It is only our bad temper that we put down to being tired or worried or hungry; we put our good temper down to ourselves. These, then, are the two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.

Session 4

II

| *Summa Theologiae, Question 94, 1221-1274*

St. Thomas Aquinas

The Natural Law:

I answer that, As stated above ([I-II:91:3](#)), the precepts of the [natural law](#) are to the practical reason, what the first principles of demonstrations are to the speculative reason; because both are self-evident principles. Now a thing is said to be self-evident in two ways: first, in itself; secondly, in relation to us. Any proposition is said to be self-evident in itself, if its predicate is contained in the notion of the subject: although, to one who [knows](#) not the definition of the subject, it happens that such a proposition is not self-evident. For instance, this proposition, "Man is a rational being," is, in its very [nature](#), self-evident, since who says "[man](#)," says "a rational being": and yet to one who [knows](#) not what a man is, this proposition is not self-evident. Hence it is that, as [Boethius](#) says (De Hebdom.), certain axioms or propositions are universally self-evident to all; and such are those propositions whose terms are [known](#) to all, as, "Every whole is greater than its part," and, "Things equal to one and the same are equal to one another." But some propositions are self-evident only to the wise, who understand the meaning of the terms of such propositions: thus to one who understands that an [angel](#) is not a body, it is self-evident that an [angel](#) is not circumscriptively in a place: but this is not evident to the unlearned, for they cannot grasp it.

Now a certain order is to be found in those things that are apprehended universally. For that which, before aught else, falls under apprehension, is "being," the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends. Wherefore the first indemonstrable principle is that "the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time," which is based on the notion of "being" and "not-being": and on this principle all others are based, as is stated in Metaph. iv, text. 9. Now as "being" is the first thing that falls under the apprehension simply, so "[good](#)" is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an end under the aspect of [good](#). Consequently the first principle of practical reason is one founded on the notion of [good](#), viz. that "[good](#) is that which all things seek after." Hence this is the first precept of [law](#), that "[good](#) is to be done and pursued, and [evil](#) is to be avoided." All other

precepts of the natural law are based upon this: so that whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man's good (or evil) belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided.

Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, "which nature has taught to all animals" [Pandect. Just. I, tit. i], such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth. Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.

Session 4

III

| *Gospel of Matthew: Chapter 19, RSV-CE*

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶ And behold, one came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to him, “Which?” And Jesus said, “You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰ The young man said to him, “All these I have observed; what do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

Session 4

IV | “An Itinerary of Hope: Called to a Magnanimous Way of Life”, 2016 Paul Wadell

One of the biggest misconceptions about vocation is that the discovery of one's vocation is a momentary happening, an instant epiphany, or a lightning bolt that illuminates the rest of our life's path. The discovery of our vocation is, rather, a process, a journey. There may be significant, discrete moments of clarity along the way, but there is always more to be discovered and discerned. On the vocational journey we never "arrive." We are always "arriving."

Consider, for example, a vocation that all college students share: the calling to study and learn. This would seem easy enough for those who are engaged, inquisitive, able, diligent, and confident. But a semester is a long time; if the student struggles with the material of a course, does poorly on an exam, or wrestles with indifference, a once-stalwart confidence can diminish day by day. Discouragement, illness, or a family tragedy can imperil the goal of successfully completing a semester, as can a professor with high expectations or a text that seems impossible to read. Overcoming these obstacles requires courage, along with patience, perseverance, and hope—and perhaps even a certain boldness of spirit. Armed with such character traits, the disconsolate student in a stormy semester, has a much better chance of finishing the course successfully.

This example can be easily extended because, as we observe throughout this book, college students explore and discern their callings both in and out of the classroom; moreover, they face a wide range of new challenges as they do so. They meet people whose background, viewpoints, and experiences are very different from their own; they negotiate the diverse and sometimes conflicting responsibilities that accompany emerging adulthood; and they often experience loss, disappointment, and abandonment, even among those on whose support they thought they could safely rely. In the midst of such challenges and potential obstacles, persevering in one's calling will require a whole range of virtues: hospitality and humility, practical wisdom and self-control, loyalty and kindness and generosity. A life of virtue is a life well-equipped to keep taking the next step in an adventurous journey—recognizing that it is unscripted and unpredictable, and thus remaining open to surprises and to new possibilities.

The shape of a magnanimous life

A vocation entails making ourselves available to something good. It reminds us that to be human is to want our lives to count for something worthwhile, while to live only for our

own gratification depletes us. Regardless of its duration or depth or significance, every calling of our lives is a summons to fully inhabit our best selves-to become the people that we ought to be. Perhaps surprisingly, we become most fully ourselves when we focus, not on ourselves (through lives of careful calculation and strategic self-promotion), but on something greater than ourselves. This dynamic is the heart of every calling; when we say yes to a calling, in whatever way it presents itself, we grow into "the fullness of who we each have it in us to be." This process-growing into our best selves-is closely related to our discussion of the virtues, and in fact to a specific virtue: that of magnanimity, or "greatness of soul."

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) defined the virtue of magnanimity as "a certain aspiration of spirit to great things" and said that a magnanimous person is one who has "the spirit for some great act." This also describes a life lived with attention to vocation when we understand ourselves as called to the great work of attending to the world around us, rather than focusing only on ourselves. Today we often connect greatness with wealth, power, and celebrity; in contrast, the defining characteristic of magnanimity is a love for the good. The magnanimous person aspires not for fame and material wealth, but for the good. And yet, as with any virtue, this is not an isolated undertaking, as though we could simply wake up one day and decide to achieve "greatness of soul." Rather, we become magnanimous by faithfully embracing all the myriad callings of our lives, including the most mundane ones. Hence, a magnanimous life is possible for anyone-no matter what his or her circumstance might be.

Falling into a smallness of soul

If a magnanimous man or woman is a person of "great soul" or "great spirit," a pusillanimous person is the man or woman of "small soul" or "puny spirit." In his analysis of this vice, Thomas Aquinas begins by noting that everything has "a natural tendency to undertake action commensurate with its capability." Thus, pusillanimity causes us to fall short of our capabilities when we refuse to extend ourselves to achieve an aim that is "commensurate with" our powers; we refuse to be "who we have it in us to be." This can result from a number of possible causes: fatigue, trials and tribulations, fear of failure, the conviction that our callings ask too much of us, or simply a desire to gain what we desire on easier terms. We see pusillanimity at work in students who look to do the least amount of work possible for a course. We see it in tenured professors who withdraw or who never revise their courses. We see it in administrators who are much more interested in what is good for them rather than for the institution. As these examples indicate, pusillanimity means shrinking our horizons, shirking responsibilities, and abandoning our most noble and compelling aspirations; in short, we betray our callings.

If magnanimity involves looking to what is best, those tempted by the vice of pusillanimity tend to lower their sights by opting for what is easier or more immediately appealing. A pusillanimous person has puny hopes, dreams, and goals-in short, too small an expectation about one's self and one's life. Pusillanimity is a dangerous habit to acquire; through it, we not only lose our taste for what is truly good and promising, but also grow comfortable with mediocrity. We begin to think that we never need to grow, never have to change or be challenged; we avoid any goals or commitments that would call us beyond ourselves in sacrifice, goodness, or love for the sake of another. The pusillanimous person plays it safe, preferring comfort and complacency to the demands of excellence. Of course, a

magnanimous person does not suddenly become a pusillanimous person; rather, one gradually "withdraws from what is good," and often, as mentioned above, in ways that one does not recognize. Thus, this particular vice can be very hard to detect, yet relatively easy to fall into; its harvest is always harm and diminishment both to ourselves and to others.

Falling into a lethargy of soul

Acedia, which means "not to care," has traditionally been listed as one of the seven deadly or capital sins. It describes the moral and spiritual lethargy that descends on a person who has lost all aspirations for the good, either because that person no longer believes it matters or no longer believes it is possible. This pervasive malaise is debilitating because it gradually leads a person to disengage with life and to lose affection for what is truly good and worthwhile. Thomas Aquinas spoke of acedia as a "spiritual apathy" that results in "a kind of oppressive sorrow which so depresses us that we want to do nothing"-the clearest sign of which is that the work that used to enthrall us no longer holds any interest for us. That "work" meant not only one's occupation or profession, but all the callings of one's life and their accompanying responsibilities. Eventually the despondency characteristic of acedia expands from an emotional state into the deliberate decision to flee from what we are called to do.

Josef Pieper insightfully describes acedia as "a perverted humility" and says that a person caught in acedia, instead of being grateful for all our gifts and talents, expressly wishes to have been left in peace.³⁷ That is why acedia can be described not only as sorrow about the good but also, more seriously, as loathing the good. As the vice of acedia grows in us, we move from disillusionment and disenchantment about what is best, to despair of ever attaining it, and finally to an almost vehement disgust for it. This sounds like a dramatic shift, yet-as with pusillanimity-one can begin to slide into acedia without even being aware of it. This is especially true when we avoid the demands of our callings not so much through idleness or laziness, but by the restless busyness and endless activity that enables us to flee the demands of love and ignore the appeal of the good.

Acedia may be more pervasive than we would like to admit. The cynicism that characterizes acedia tends to dismiss anything noble or honorable as impossibly idealistic and to avoid investing in anything truly excellent, anything genuinely transcendent. It manifests itself in the arrogance that prevents us from receiving constructive criticism or correction (behavior not unknown in academic circles). Moreover, acedia is fostered by a culture that encourages us to be constantly entertained, enticed, and distracted, that continually urges us to set aside substantive and enriching goods for the sake of lesser ones, and that teaches us to see our lives as little more than a series of disconnected events going nowhere. Such a culture seems to proclaim that there really is nothing noble and excellent to which one might aspire.

Educating for vocation requires opening our eyes to the reality of acedia, recognizing its dangers, and helping our students-as well as ourselves-to discover ways to resist it. This isn't easy, because often the very things we are told to see as the most important elements of a good and successful life (wealth, possessions, power, status, achievements) can be paths into acedia rather than ways out of it, especially if we allow desire for these things to rule us. Ancient Christian writers called this "worldliness," and described it as being so enamored with the things of this world that we shut the door on higher things, on better things.

Charles Pinches captured well the baneful effects of acedia when he said that it "casts down our spirits so that we cannot imagine any higher good for ourselves, any better path to travel. We become mired in small pleasures, shrunken creatures with ... low horizons." A path of drudgery and a low horizon are not very conducive to undertaking a journey-especially a journey so complex, eventful, and potentially exciting as the exploration and discernment of our vocations."

Virtues and practices to sustain a magnanimous life

How can we confront and overcome these vices in order to flourish in our callings and to grow in the joy of a magnanimous life? While many virtues and practices could be suggested as helpful in this regard, two will be discussed here: the virtue of hope and the practice of friendship.

Session 4

V | “The Moral Bucket List”, 2015
David Brooks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INpPg9eWkXU>

‘How is the Good of this Life Related to the Good of Eternal Life?’

- *For Augustine, this life is a journey. How is this life different from our destination? How is it similar?*
- *Why should our understanding of heaven shape the way we live on our pilgrimage?*
- *What is the meaning of the beatitudes? How are we to live them out?*
- *How do we prepare for our death and our encounter with the Risen Lord?*
- *How do we live out the investment of our talents and the admonition to serve the least of these?*
- *How does the promise of eternal life actually deepen our encounter with people in this life?*

Session 5

I

| *St. Augustine Sermon 256: During Easter
Week, 418 A.D.*

The alleluia of the anxious and worrying

It is evidently the pleasure of the Lord our God that, finding myself present here in the flesh, I should also have been singing *alleluia* with your graces. Alleluia means “Praise the Lord.” So let us praise the Lord, brothers and sisters, with our lives and our tongues, with hearts and mouths, with our voices and our behavior. That, surely, is how God wants *alleluia* to be sung to him, so that there is no discord in the singer. So first of all let there be harmony in ourselves between tongues and lives, between mouths and consciences. Let our voices, I repeat, be in harmony with our behavior, or else it may happen that good voices are witnesses against bad behavior.

Oh blissful *alleluia* in heaven, where the angels are God's temple! There, I mean, supreme harmony reigns among those who are praising, because there is no anxiety about their exultant singing. That's because there is no *law in the members fighting against the law of the mind* (Rom 7:23) there; no aggressive cupidity there, to endanger the victory of charity. So here let us sing *alleluia* while still anxious and worrying, so that there we may be able to sing it one day without any worry or care.

But even here, among the dangers, among the trials and temptations of this life, both by others and by us let *alleluia* be sung.^{†9} *God is faithful*, he says, *who will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to endure*. So here too let us sing *alleluia*. We human beings are still in the dock, but God is faithful. He didn't say, “He will not permit you to be tempted,” but *will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to endure; but with the temptation he will also make a way out, so that you may be able to endure it* (1 Cor 10:13). You have entered into temptation; but God will also make a way out, so that you do not perish in the temptation; so that like a potter's jar, you may be shaped by the preaching, cooked by the tribulation. But when you enter the temptation, bear in mind the way out; because God is faithful, *God will watch over your going in and your coming out* (Ps 121:8).

Furthermore, when this body has become immortal and imperishable, when all temptation has been done away with; because *the body is dead*—why is it dead? *Because of sin*. *But the spirit is life*—they're the apostle's words; why? *Because of justice*. So do we leave the body dead? No, but listen: *But if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life also to your mortal bodies*. Now, you see, it's an embodiment of soul, then it will be an embodiment of spirit.^{†10} *The first man, you see, became a living soul, the last man a life-giving spirit* (1 Cor 15:45). That's why *he will give life also to your mortal bodies, because of his Spirit dwelling in you* (Rom 8:10-11). Oh, what a happy *alleluia* there, how carefree, how safe from all opposition, where nobody will be an enemy, no one cease to be a friend!

God praised there, and God praised here; here, though, by the anxious, there by the carefree; here by those who are going to die, there by those who are going to live forever; here in hope, there in hope realized; here on the way, there at home. So now, my dear brothers and sisters, let us sing, not to delight our leisure, but to ease our toil. In the way travelers are in the habit of singing; sing, but keep on walking. Ease your toil by singing, don't fall in love with laziness. Sing, and keep on walking. What's "keep on walking"? Make some progress, make progress in goodness. There are some people, you see, according to the apostle, who progress from bad to worse.^{†11} You, if you're making progress, are walking; but make progress in goodness, progress in the right faith, progress in good habits and behavior. Sing and keep on walking. Don't stray off the road, don't go back, don't stay where you are.

Session 5

II

The Gospel of Matthew: Chapters 5 and 6

The Sermon on the Mount

⁵ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Fulfillment of the Law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder,^[a] and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵ “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Adultery

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

³¹ “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ ³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Eye for Eye

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor[¶] and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Giving to the Needy

⁶ “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

⁵ “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,^[L] your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Do Not Worry

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^[M]?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Judging Others

⁷ “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

³ “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the

plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

⁶“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask, Seek, Knock

⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

True and False Prophets

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

True and False Disciples

²¹“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ ²³Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

The Wise and Foolish Builders

²⁴“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Session 5

III

The Gospel of Matthew: Chapter 25

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.^[a] **2** Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. **3** For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; **4** but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. **5** As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. **6** But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ **7** Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. **8** And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ **9** But the wise replied, ‘Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ **10** And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. **11** Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ **12** But he replied, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ **13** Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

The Parable of the Talents

14 “For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; **15** to one he gave five talents,^[b] to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. **16** He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. **17** So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. **18** But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. **19** Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. **20** And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ **21** His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.’ **22** And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ **23** His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.’ **24** He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where

you did not winnow; ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

The Judgment of the Nations

³¹ "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? ³⁸ And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? ³⁹ And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' ⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' ⁴⁶ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Session 5

IV

| *The Four Loves*: from the chapter on
friendship
C.S. Lewis

“Lamb says somewhere that if, of three friends (A, B, and C), A should die, then B loses not only A but "A's part in C", while C loses not only A but "A's part in B". In each of my friends there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out. By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets. Now that Charles is dead, I shall never again see Ronald's reaction to a specifically Caroline joke. Far from having more of Ronald, having him "to myself" now that Charles is away, I have less of Ronald. Hence true Friendship is the least jealous of loves. Two friends delight to be joined by a third, and three by a fourth, if only the newcomer is qualified to become a real friend. They can then say, as the blessed souls say in Dante, "Here comes one who will augment our loves." For in this love "to divide is not to take away". Of course the scarcity of kindred souls--not to mention practical considerations about the size of rooms and the audibility of voices--set limits to the enlargement of the circle; but within those limits we possess each friend not less but more as the number of those with whom we share him increases. In this, Friendship exhibits a glorious "nearness by resemblance" to Heaven itself where the very multitude of the blessed (which no man can number) increases the fruition which each has of God. For every soul, seeing Him in her own way, doubtless communicates that unique vision to all the rest. That, says an old author, is why the Seraphim in Isaiah's vision are crying "Holy, Holy, Holy" *to one another* (Isaiah VI, 3). The more we thus share the Heavenly Bread between us, the more we shall all have.”

Session 5

V

|

The Problem of Pain: from the chapter on heaven C.S. Lewis

“You may have noticed that the books you really love are bound together by a secret thread. You know very well what is the common quality that makes you love them, though you cannot put it into words: but most of your friends do not see it at all, and often wonder why, liking this, you should also like that. Again, you have stood before some landscape, which seems to embody what you have been looking for all your life; and then turned to the friend at your side who appears to be seeing what you saw -- but at the first words a gulf yawns between you, and you realise that this landscape means something totally different to him, that he is pursuing an alien vision and cares nothing for the ineffable suggestion by which you are transported. Even in your hobbies, has there not always been some secret attraction which the others are curiously ignorant of -- something, not to be identified with, but always on the verge of breaking through, the smell of cut wood in the workshop or the clap-clap of water against the boat's side? Are not all lifelong friendships born at the moment when at last you meet another human being who has some inkling (but faint and uncertain even in the best) of that something which you were born desiring, and which, beneath the flux of other desires and in all the momentary silences between the louder passions, night and day, year by year, from childhood to old age, you are looking for, watching for, listening for? You have never had it. All the things that have ever deeply possessed your soul have been but hints of it -- tantalising glimpses, promises never quite fulfilled, echoes that died away just as they caught your ear. But if it should really become manifest -- if there ever came an echo that did not die away but swelled into the sound itself -- you would know it. Beyond all possibility of doubt you would say "Here at last is the thing I was made for". We cannot tell each other about it. It is the secret signature of each soul, the incommunicable and unappeasable want, the thing we desired before we met our wives or made our friends or chose our work, and which we shall still desire on our deathbeds, when the mind no longer knows wife or friend or work. While we are, this is. If we lose this, we lose all (...)

I am considering not how, but why, He makes each soul unique. If He had no use for all these differences, I do not see why He should have created more souls than one. Be sure that the ins and outs of your individuality are no mystery to Him; and one day they will no longer be a mystery to you. The mould in which a key is made would be a strange thing, if you had never seen a key: and the key itself a strange thing if you had never seen a lock. Your soul has a curious shape because it is a hollow made to fit a particular swelling in the infinite contours of the divine substance, or a key to unlock one of the doors in the house with many mansions. For it is not humanity in the abstract that is to be saved, but you, you, the individual reader, John Stubbs or Janet Smith. Blessed and fortunate creature, your eyes shall

behold Him and not another's. all that you are, sins apart, is destined, if you will let God have His good way, to utter satisfaction...Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand. (151-152). (...)

If all experienced God in the same way and returned Him an identical worship, the song of the Church triumphant would have no symphony, it would be like an orchestra in which all the instruments played the same note. Aristotle has told us that a city is a unity of unlikes, and St. Paul that a body is a unity of different members. Heaven is a city, and a body, because the blessed remain eternally different: a society, because each has something to tell all the others—fresh and ever fresh news of the “Ny God” whom each finds in Him whom all praise as “Our God”. For doubtless the continually successful, yet never completed, attempt by each soul to communicate its unique vision to all others (and that by means whereof earthly art and philosophy are but clumsy imitations) is also among the ends for which the individual was created. (155)

‘God the Source and Destination of All Goodness’

The **good** is what all things desire.
-Aristotle

1. What does it mean that God is the highest good? How does this impact our understanding of all things as good?
2. Why is it valuable to contemplate what the Kingdom of God will be like in its fulfillment?
3. What is most compelling about Anselm’s description of heaven?
4. What does the story “Revelation” tell us about the woundedness of the human heart and what our ultimate healing will be like?
5. What is heaven like for Flannery O’Connor?
6. From these readings over 6 sessions, what does God now mean to you? How do you understand the human person and their journey through this life?

Session 6

I

| *The Nature of the Good, 354-430 A.D.*

Augustine

The highest good, than which there is none higher, is God, and for this reason he is the immutable good and therefore truly eternal and truly immortal. All other goods are made only *by* him but are not made *of* him. For that which is of him is what he is, but those things which have been made by him are not what he is. And for this reason he alone is immutable, while all the things that he has made are mutable because he has made them from nothing. For he is so almighty that he can make good things, great and small, heavenly and earthly, spiritual and corporeal, of nothing, that is, of what does not exist at all. But because he is just, he did not make the things which he made of nothing equal to that which he begot of himself. Because, therefore, all goods, whether great or small, through any levels of reality, can only be made by God, but every nature insofar as it is a nature is something good, no nature can be made except by the highest and true God. For all goods, even though not the highest goods but close to the highest good, and — again — all goods, even the last, which are far from the highest good, can be made only by the highest good. Every spirit, therefore, even though a mutable one, and every body is made by God. These are all the natures that have been made. Every nature is, indeed, either a spirit or a body. God is an immutable spirit; a mutable spirit is a nature that has been made, but one better than a body. But a body is not a spirit, except when the wind is said to be a spirit in a certain sense, because it is invisible to us and we still feel its great force.

Session 6

II

| From *Proslogion*, 1033-1109

Anselm

24. *A speculation as to what kind and how great this good is*

Now, my soul, rouse and lift up your whole understanding and think as much as you can on what kind and how great this good is. For if particular goods are enjoyable, consider carefully how enjoyable is that good which contains the joyfulness of all goods; not [a joy] such as we have experienced in created things, but as different from this as the Creator differs from the creature. For if life that is created is good, how good is the Life that creates? If the salvation that has been brought about is joyful, how joyful is the Salvation that brings about all salvation? If wisdom in the knowledge of things that have been brought into being is lovable, how lovable is the Wisdom that has brought all things into being out of nothing? Finally, if there are many great delights in delightful things, of what kind and how great is the delight in Him who made these same delightful things?

25. *Which goods belong to those who enjoy this good, and how great they are*

Oh he who will enjoy this good, what will be his and what will not be his! Whatever he wishes will certainly be his and whatever he does not wish will not be his. In fact, all the goods of body and soul will be there such that ‘neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived’ [1 Cor. 2: 9]. Why, then, do you wander about so much, O insignificant man, seeking the goods of your soul and body? Love the one good in which all good things are, and that is sufficient. Desire the simple good which contains every good, and that is enough. For what do you love, O my flesh, what do you desire, O my soul? There it is, there it is, whatever you love, whatever you desire. If beauty delights you, ‘the just will shine as the sun’ [Matt. 13: 43]. If the swiftness or strength or freedom of the body that nothing can withstand [delights you], ‘they will be like the angels of God’ [Matt. 22: 30]; for it is ‘sown as a natural body and shall rise as a spiritual body’ [1 Cor. 15: 44] by a supernatural power. If it is a long and healthy life, a healthy eternity and an eternal health is there since ‘the just will live forever’ [Wis. 5: 16] and ‘the salvation of the just is from the Lord’ [Ps. 36: 39]. If it is satisfaction, they will be satisfied ‘when the glory of God will appear’ [Ps. 16: 15]. If it is quenching of thirst, ‘they will be inebriated with the abundance of the house of God’ [Ps. 35: 9]. If it is melody, there the choirs of angels play unceasingly to God. If it is pleasure of any kind, not impure but pure, God ‘will make them drink from the torrent of His pleasure’ [Ps. 35: 9]. If it is wisdom, the very Wisdom of God will show itself to them. If it is friendship, they will love God more than themselves and one another as themselves, and God will love them more than they love themselves because it is through Him that they love Him and themselves and one another, and He loves Himself and them through Himself. If it is peace, for all of them there will be one will, since they will have none save the will of God. If it is power, they will be all-powerful with regard to their wills, as God is with His. For just as God will be able to do what He wills through Himself, so through Him they will be able to do what they will; because, just as they will not will anything save what He wills, so

He will will whatever they will, and what He intends to will cannot not be. If it is honours and riches, God will set His good and faithful servants over many things [Matt. 25: 21, 23]; indeed, they will be called ‘sons of God’ and ‘Gods’ [Matt. 5: 9] and will in fact be so; and where the Son will be there also they will be, ‘heirs indeed of God and co-heirs of Christ’ [Rom. 8: 17]. If it is real security, they will indeed be as assured that this same [security], or rather this same good, will never in any way fail them, as they will be assured that they will not lose it of their own accord, nor that the loving God will take it away against their will from those who love Him, nor that anything more powerful than God will separate God and them against their will.

What joy there is indeed and how great it is where there exists so great a good! O human heart, O needy heart, O heart experienced in suffering, indeed overwhelmed by suffering, how greatly would you rejoice if you abounded in all these things! Ask your heart whether it could comprehend its joy in its so great blessedness? But surely if someone else whom you loved in every respect as yourself possessed that same blessedness, your joy would be doubled for you would rejoice as much for him as for yourself. If, then, two or three or many more possessed it you would rejoice just as much for each one as for yourself, if you loved each one as yourself. Therefore in that perfect and pure love of the countless holy angels and holy men where no one will love another less than himself, each will rejoice for every other as for himself. If, then, the heart of man will scarcely be able to comprehend the joy that will belong to it from so great a good, how will it comprehend so many and such great joys? Indeed, to the degree that each one loves some other, so he will rejoice in the good of that other; therefore, just as each one in that perfect happiness will love God incomparably more than himself and all others with him, so he will rejoice immeasurably more over the happiness of God than over his own happiness and that of all the others with him. But if they love God with their whole heart, their whole mind, their whole soul, while yet their whole heart, their whole mind, their whole soul, is not equal to the grandeur of this love, they will assuredly so rejoice with their whole heart, their whole mind, and their whole soul, that their whole heart, their whole mind, their whole soul will not be equal to the fullness of their joy.

26. *Whether this is the ‘fullness of joy’ which the Lord promises?*

My God and my Lord, my hope and the joy of my heart, tell my soul if this is the joy of which You speak through Your Son: ‘Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete’ [John 16: 24]. For I have discovered a joy that is complete and more than complete. Indeed, when the heart is filled with that joy, the mind is filled with it, the soul is filled with it, the whole man is filled with it, yet joy beyond measure will remain. The whole of that joy, then, will not enter into those who rejoice, but those who rejoice will enter wholly into that joy. Speak, Lord, tell Your servant within his heart if this is the joy into which Your servants will enter who enter ‘into the joy of the Lord’ [Matt. 25: 21]. But surely that joy in which Your chosen ones will rejoice is that which ‘neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man’ [1 Cor. 2: 9]. I have not yet said or thought, then, Lord, how greatly your blessed will rejoice. They will, no doubt, rejoice as much as they love, and they will love as much as they know. How much will they know You, then, Lord, and how much will they love You? In very truth, ‘neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man’ [ibid.] in this life how much they will know You and love You in that life.

I pray, O God, that I may know You and love You, so that I may rejoice in You. And if I cannot do so fully in this life may I progress gradually until it comes to fullness. Let the knowledge of You grow in me here, and there [in heaven] be made complete; let Your love grow in me here and there be made complete, so that here

my joy may be great in hope, and there be complete in reality. Lord, by Your Son You command, or rather, counsel us to ask and you promise that we shall receive so that our 'joy may be complete' [John 16: 24]. I ask, Lord, as You counsel through our admirable counsellor. May I receive what You promise through Your truth so that my 'joy may be complete' [ibid.]. God of truth, I ask that I may receive so that my 'joy may be complete' [ibid.]. Until then let my mind meditate on it, let my tongue speak of it, let my heart love it, let my mouth preach it. Let my soul hunger for it, let my flesh thirst for it, my whole being desire it, until I enter into the 'joy of the Lord' [Matt. 25: 21], who is God, Three in One, 'blessed forever. Amen' [1 Rom. 1: 25].

Session 6

III

“Revelation”, *Everything That*

Rises Must Converge, 1965

Flannery O’Connor

The Doctor’s waiting room, which was very small, was almost full when the Turpins entered and Mrs. Turpin, who was very large, made it look even smaller by her presence. She stood looming at the head of the magazine table set in the center of it, a living demonstration that the room was inadequate and ridiculous. Her little bright black eyes took in all the patients as she sized up the seating situation. There was one vacant chair and a place on the sofa occupied by a blond child in a dirty blue romper who should have been told to move over and make room for the lady. He was five or six, but Mrs. Turpin saw at once that no one was going to tell him to move over. He was slumped down in the seat, his arms idle at his sides and his eyes idle in his head; his nose ran unchecked.

Mrs. Turpin put a firm hand on Claud's shoulder and said in a voice that included anyone who wanted to listen, "Claud, you sit in that chair there," and gave him a push down into the vacant one. Claud was florid and bald and sturdy, somewhat shorter than Mrs. Turpin, but he sat down as if he were accustomed to doing what she told him to.

Mrs. Turpin remained standing. The only man in the room besides Claud was a lean stringy old fellow with a rusty hand spread out on each knee, whose eyes were closed as if he were asleep or dead or pretending to be so as not to get up and offer her his seat. Her gaze settled agreeably on a well-dressed grey-haired lady whose eyes met hers and whose expression said: if that child belonged to me, he would have some manners and move over-there's plenty of room there for you and him too.

Claud looked up with a sigh and made as if to rise.

"Sit down," Mrs. Turpin said. "You know you're not supposed to stand on that leg. He has an ulcer on his leg," she explained.

Claud lifted his foot onto the magazine table and rolled his trouser leg up to reveal a purple swelling on a plump marble white calf.

"My!" the pleasant lady said. "How did you do that?"

"A cow kicked him," Mrs. Turpin said. "Goodness!" said the lady.

Claud rolled his trouser leg down. "Maybe the little boy would move over," the lady suggested, but the child did not stir.

"Somebody will be leaving in a minute," Mrs. Turpin said. She could not understand why a doctor-with as much money as they made charging five dollars a day to just stick their head in the hospital door and look at you-couldn't afford a decent-sized waiting room. This one 3

was hardly bigger than a garage. The table was cluttered with limp-looking magazines and at one end of it there was a big green glass ashtray full of cigarette butts and cotton wads with little blood spots on them. If she had had anything to do with the running of the place, that would have been emptied every so often. There were no chairs against the wall at the head of the room. It had a rectangular-shaped panel in it that permitted a view of the office where the nurse came and went and the secretary listened to the radio. A plastic fern, in a gold pot sat in the opening and trailed its fronds down almost to the floor. The radio was softly playing gospel music.

Just then the inner door opened and a nurse with the highest stack of yellow hair Mrs. Turpin had ever seen put her face in the crack and called for the next patient. The woman sitting beside Claud grasped the two arms of her chair and hoisted herself up; she pulled her dress free from her legs and lumbered through the door where the nurse had disappeared.

Mrs. Turpin eased into the vacant chair, which held her tight as a corset. "I wish I could reduce," she said, and rolled her eyes and gave a comic sigh.

"Oh, you aren't fat," the stylish lady said.

"Ooooo I am too," Mrs. Turpin said. "Claud he eats all he wants to and never weighs over one hundred and seventy-five pounds, but me I just look at something good to eat and I gain some weight," and her stomach and shoulders shook with laughter. "You can eat all you want to, can't YOU, Claud?" she asked, turning to him.

Claud only grinned.

"Well, as long as you have such a good disposition," the stylish lady said, "I don't think it makes a bit of difference what size you are. You just can't beat a good disposition."

Next to her was a fat girl of eighteen or nineteen, scowling into a thick blue book which Mrs. Turpin saw was entitled *Human Development*. The girl raised her head and directed her scowl at Mrs. Turpin as if she did not like her looks. She appeared annoyed that anyone should speak while she tried to read. The poor girl's face was blue with acne and Mrs. Turpin thought how pitiful it was to have a face like that at that age. She gave the girl a friendly smile but the girl only scowled the harder. Mrs. Turpin herself was fat but she had always had good skin, and, though she was forty-seven years old, there was not a wrinkle in her face except around her eyes from laughing too much.

Next to the ugly girl was the child, still in exactly the same position, and next to him was a thin leathery old woman in a cotton print dress. She and Claud had three sacks of chicken feed in their pump house that was in the same print. She had seen from the first that the child belonged with the old woman. She could tell by the way they sat- kind of vacant and white-trashy, as if they would sit there until Doomsday if nobody called and told them to get up. And at right angles but next to the well-dressed pleasant lady was a lank-faced woman who was certainly the child's mother. She had on a yellow sweatshirt and wine-colored slacks, both gritty-looking, and the rims of her lips were stained with snuff. Her dirty yellow hair was tied behind with a little piece of red paper ribbon. Worse than niggers any day, Mrs. Turpin thought.

The gospel hymn playing was, "When I looked up and He looked down," and Mrs. Turpin, who knew it, supplied the last line mentally, "And wona these days I know I'll we-eara crown."

Without appearing to, Mrs. Turpin always noticed people's feet. The well-dressed lady had on red and grey suede shoes to match her dress. Mrs. Turpin had on her good black patent-leather pumps. The ugly girl had on Girl Scout shoes and heavy socks. The old woman had on tennis shoes and the white-trashy mother had on what appeared to be bedroom slippers, black straw with gold braid threaded through them exactly what you would have expected her to have on.

Sometimes at night when she couldn't go to sleep, Mrs. Turpin would occupy herself with the question of who she would have chosen to be if she couldn't have been herself. If Jesus had said to her before he made her, "There's only two places available for you. You can either be a nigger or white trash," what would she have said? "Please, Jesus, please," she would have said, "Just let me wait until there's another place available," and he would have said, "No, you have to go right now", and I have only those two places so make up your mind." She would have wiggled and squirmed and begged and pleaded but it would have been no use and finally she would have said, "All right, make me a nigger then-but that don't mean a trashy one." And he would have made her a near clean respectable Negro woman, herself but black.

Next to the child's mother was a redheaded youngish woman, reading one of the magazines and working a piece of chewing gum, hell for leather, as Claud would say. Mrs. Turpin could not see the woman's feet. She was not white trash, just common. Sometimes Mrs. Turpin occupied herself at night naming the classes of people. On the bottom of the heap were most colored people, not the kind she would have been if she had been one, but most of them; then next to them -- not above, just away from -- were the white-trash; then above them were the home-owners, and above them the home-and-land owners, to which she and Claud belonged, Above she and Claud were people with a lot of money and much bigger houses and much more land. But here the complexity of it would begin to bear in on her, for some of the people with a lot of money were common and ought to be below she and Claud and some of the people who had good blood had lost their money and had to rent and then there some colored people who owned their homes and land as well. There was a colored dentist in town who had two red Lincoln's and a swimming pool and a farm with registered whiteface cattle on it. Usually by the time she had fallen asleep all the classes of people were moiling and roiling around in her head, and she would dream they were all crammed in together in a box car, being ridden off to be put in a gas oven.

"That's a beautiful clock," she said and nodded to her right. It was a big wall clock, the face encased in a brass sunburst. "Yes, it's very pretty," the stylish lady said agreeably. "And right on the dot too," she added, glancing at her watch.

The ugly girl beside her cast an eye upward at the clock, smirked, then looked directly at Mrs. Turpin and smirked again. Then she returned her eyes to her book. She was obviously the lady's daughter because, although they didn't look anything alike as to disposition, they both had the same shape of face and the same blue eyes. On the lady they sparkled pleasantly but in the girl's scared face they appeared alternately to smolder and to blaze.

What if Jesus had said, "All right, you can be white-trash or a nigger or ugly"!

Mrs. Turpin felt an awful pity for the girl, though she thought it was one thing to be ugly and another to act ugly.

The woman with the snuff-stained lips turned around in her chair and looked up at the

clock. Then she turned back and appeared to look a little to the side of Mrs. Turpin. There was a cast in one of her eyes. "You want to know where you can get you one of them there clocks?" she asked in a loud voice.

"No , I already have a nice clock," Mrs. Turpin said. Once somebody like her got a leg in the conversation, she would be all over it.

"You can get you one with green stamps," the woman said. "That's most likely where he got hisn. Save you up enough, you can get you most anythang. I got me some joo'ry."

Ought to have got you a wash rag and some soap, Mrs. Turpin thought.

"I get contour sheets with mine," the pleasant lady said.

The daughter slammed her book shut. She looked straight in front of her, directly through Mrs. Turpin and on through the yellow curtain and the plate glass window which made the wall behind her. The girl's eyes seemed lit all of a sudden with a peculiar light, an unnatural light like night road signs give. Mrs. Turpin turned her head to see if there was anything going on outside that she should see, but she could not see anything. Figures passing cast only a pale shadow through the curtain. There was no reason the girl should single her out for her ugly looks.

"Miss Finley," the nurse said, cracking the door. The gum-chewing woman got up and passed in front of her and Claud and went into the office. She had on red high-heeled shoes.

Directly across the table, the ugly girl's eyes were fixed on Mrs. Turpin as if she had some very special reason for disliking her.

"This is wonderful weather, isn't it?" the girl's mother said. "It's good weather for cotton if you can get the niggers to pick it," Mrs. Turpin said, "but niggers don't want to pick cotton any more. You can't get the white folks to pick it and now you can't get the niggers because they got to be right up there with the white folks."

"They gonna try anyways," the white-trash woman said, leaning forward.

"Do you have one of those cotton-picking machines?" the pleasant lady asked. "No," Mrs. Turpin said, "they leave half the cotton in the field. We don't have much cotton anyway. If you want to make it farming now, you have to have a little of everything. We got a couple of acres of cotton and a few hogs and chickens and just enough white-face that Claud can look after them himself.

"One thang I don't want," the white-trash woman said, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. "Hogs. Nasty stinking things, a gruntin and a-rootin all over the place."

Mrs. Turpin gave her the merest edge of her attention. "Our hogs are not dirty and they don't stink," she said. "They're cleaner than some children I've seen. Their feet never touch the ground. We have a pig parlor- that's where you raise them on concrete," she explained to the pleasant lady, "and Claud scoots them down with the hose every afternoon and washes off the floor." Cleaner by far than that child right, she thought. Poor nasty little thing. He had not moved except to put the thumb of his dirty hand into his mouth.

The woman turned her face away from Mrs. Turpin. "I know I wouldn't scoot down no hog with no hose," she said to the wall. You wouldn't have no hog to scoot down, Mrs. Turpin

said to herself. "A-gruntin and a-rootin and a-groanin," the woman muttered.

"We got a little of everything," Mrs. Turpin said to the pleasant lady. "It's no use in having more than you can handle yourself with help like it is. We found enough niggers to pick our cotton this year but Claud he has to go after them and take them home'again in the evening. They can't walk that half a mile. No they can't. I tell you," she said and laughed merrily, "I sure am tired of butter'ing up niggers, but you got to love em if you want em to work for you. When they come in the morning, I run out and I say, "How yal this morning?" and when Claud drives them off to the field I just wave to beat the band and they just wave back." And she waved her hand rapidly to illustrate.

"Like you read out of the same book," the lady said, showing she understood perfectly.

"Child, yes," Mrs. Turpin said. "And when they come in from the field, I run out with a bucket of ice water. That's the way it's going to be from now on," she said. "You may as well face it."

"One thang I know," the white-trash woman said. "Two things I ain't going to do: love no niggers or scoot down no hog with no hose." And she let out a bark of contempt.

The look that Mrs. Turpin and the pleasant lady exchanged indicated they both understood that you had to have certain things before you could know certain things. But every time Mrs. Turpin exchanged a look with the lady, she was aware that the ugly girl's peculiar eyes were still on her, and she had trouble bringing her attention back to the conversation.

"When you got something," she said, "you got to look after it." And when you ain't got a thing but breath and britches, she added to herself, you can afford to come to town every morning and just sit on the Court House coping and spit.

A grotesque revolving shadow passed across the curtain behind her and was thrown palely on the opposite wall. Then a bicycle clattered down against the outside of the building. The door opened and a colored boy glided in with a tray from the drug store. It had two large red and white paper cups on it with tops on them. He was a tall, very black boy in discolored white pants and a green nylon shirt. He was chewing gum slowly, as if to music. He set the tray down in the office opening next to the fern and stuck his head through to look for the secretary. She was not in there. He rested his arms on the ledge and waited, his narrow bottom stuck out, swaying slowly to the left and right.

He raised a hand over his head and scratched the base of his skull. "You see that button there, boy?" Mrs. Turpin said. "You can punch that and she'll come. She's probably in the back somewhere."

"Is thas right?" the boy said agreeably, as if he had never seen the button before. He leaned to the right and put his finger on it. "She sometime out," he said and twisted around to face his audience, his elbows behind him on the counter. The nurse appeared and he twisted back again. She handed him a dollar and he rooted in his pocket and made the change and counted it out to her. She gave him fifteen cents for a tip and he went out with the empty tray. The heavy door swung to slowly and closed at length with the sound of suction. For a moment no one spoke.

"They ought to send all them niggers back to Africa," the white trash woman said. "That's wher they come from in first place."

"Oh, I couldn't do without my good colored friends," the pleasant lady said.

"There's a heap of things worse than a nigger," Mrs. Turpin agreed. "It's all kinds of them just like it's all kinds of us."

"Yes, and it takes all kinds to make the world go round," the lady said in her musical voice.

As she said it, the raw-complexioned girl snapped her teeth together. Her lower lip turned downwards and inside out, revealing the pale pink inside of her mouth. After a second it rolled back up. It was the ugliest face Mrs. Turpin had ever seen anyone make and for a moment she was certain that the girl had made it at her. She was looking at her as if she had known and disliked her all her life—all of Mrs. Turpin's life, it seemed too, not just all the girl's life. Why, girl, I don't even know you, Mrs. Turpin said silently.

She forced her attention back to the discussion. "It wouldn't be practical to send them back to Africa," she said. "They wouldn't want to go. They got it too good here."

"Wouldn't be what they wanted—if I had anythang to do with it," the woman said.

"It wouldn't be a way in the world you could get all the niggers back over there," Mrs. Turpin said. "They'd be hiding out and lying down and turning sick on you and wailing and hollering and raring and pitching. It wouldn't be a way in the world to get them over there."

"They got over here," the trashy woman said. "Get back like they got over."

"It wasn't so many of them then," Mrs. Turpin explained. The woman looked at Mrs. Turpin as if here was an idiot indeed but Mrs. Turpin was not bothered by the look, considering where it came from.

"Nooo," she said, "they're going to stay here where they can go to New York and marry white folks and improve their color. That's what they all want to do, every one of them, improve their color."

"You know what comes of that, don't you?" Claud asked.

"No, Claud, what?" Mrs. Turpin said.

Claud's eyes twinkled. "White-faced niggers," he said with never a smile.

Everybody in the office laughed except the white-trash and the ugly girl. The girl gripped the book in her lap with white fingers. The trashy woman looked around her from face to face as if she thought they were all idiots. The old woman in the feed sack dress continued to gaze expressionless across the floor at the high-top shoes of the man opposite her, the one who had been pretending to be asleep when the Turpins came in. He was laughing heartily, his hands still spread out on his knees. The child had fallen to the side and was lying now almost face down in the old woman's lap.

While they recovered from their laughter, the nasal chorus on the radio kept the room from silence.

"You go to blank blank And I'll go to mine But we'll all blank along To-geth-ther, And all along the blank We'll help each-other out Smile-ling in any kind of Weath-ther!"

Mrs. Turpin didn't catch every word but she caught enough to agree with the spirit of the

song and it turned her thoughts sober. To help anybody out that needed it was her philosophy of life. She never spared herself when she found somebody in need, whether they were white or black, trash or decent. And of all she had to be thankful for, she was most thankful that this was so. If Jesus had said, "You call be high society and have all the money you want and be thin and svelte-like, but you can't be a good woman with it," she would have had to say, "Well don't make me that then. Make me a good woman and it don't matter what else, how fat or how ugly or how poor!" Her heart rose. He had not made her a nigger or white-trash or ugly! He had made her herself and given her a little of everything. Jesus, thank you! she said. Thank you thank you! Whenever she counted her blessings she felt as buoyant as if she weighed one hundred and twenty five pounds instead of one hundred and eighty.

"What's wrong with your little boy?" the pleasant lady asked the white trashy woman.

"He has a ulcer," the woman said proudly. "He ain't give me a minute's peace since he was born. Him and her are just alike," she said, nodding at the old woman, who was running her leathery fingers through the child's pale hair. "Look like I can't get nothing down them two but Co' Cola and candy."

That's all you try to get down em Mrs. Turpin said to herself. Too lazy to light the fire. There was nothing you could tell her about people like them that she didn't know already. And it was not just that they didn't have anything. Because if you gave them everything, in two weeks it would all be broken or filthy or they would have chopped it up for lightwood. She knew all this from her own experience. Help them you must, but help them you couldn't.

All at once the ugly girl turned her lips inside out again. Her eyes were fixed like two drills on Mrs. Turpin. This time there was no mistaking that there was something urgent behind them.

Girl, Mrs. Turpin exclaimed silently, I haven't done a thing to you! The girl might be confusing her with somebody else. There was no need to sit by and let herself be intimidated.

"You must be in college," she said boldly, looking directly at the girl. "I see you reading a book there."

The girl continued to stare and pointedly did not answer. Her mother blushed at this rudeness. "The lady asked you a question, Mary Grace," she said under her breath.

"I have ears," Mary Grace said.

The poor mother blushed again. "Mary Grace goes to Wellesley College," she explained. She twisted one of the buttons on her dress. "In Massachusetts, she added with a grimace. "And in the summer she just keeps right on studying. Just reads all the time, a real book worm. She's done real well at Wellesley; she's taking English and Math and History and Psychology and Social Studies," she rattled on "and I think it's too much. I think she ought to get out and have fun."

The girl looked as if she would like to hurl them all through the plate glass window.

"Way up north," Mrs. Turpin murmured and thought, well, it hasn't done much for her manners.

"I'd almost rather to have him sick," the white-trash woman said, wrenching the attention

back to herself. "He's so mean when he ain't. Look like some children just take natural to meanness. It's some gets bad when they get sick but, he was the opposite. Took sick and turned good. He don't give me no trouble now. It's me waitin to see the doctor," she said.

If I was going to send anybody back to Africa, Mrs. Turpin thought, it would be your kind, woman. "Yes, indeed," she said aloud, but looking up at the ceiling, "It's a heap of things worse than a nigger." And dirtier than a hog, she added to herself

"I think people with bad dispositions are more to be pitied than anyone on earth," the pleasant lady said in a voice that was decidedly thin. "I thank the Lord he has blessed me with a good one," Mrs. Turpin said. "The day has never dawned that I couldn't find something to laugh at."

"Not since she married me anyways," Claud said with a comical straight face.

Everybody laughed except the girl and the white trash.

Mrs. Turpin's stomach shook. "He's such a caution," she said, "that I can't help but laugh at him."

The girl made a loud ugly noise through her teeth. Her mother's mouth grew thin and tight. "I think the worst thing in the world," she said, "is an ungrateful person. To have everything and not appreciate it. I know a girl," she said, "who has parents who would give her anything, a little brother who loves her clearly, who is getting a good education, who wears the best clothes, but who can never say a kind word to anyone, who never smiles, who just criticizes and complains all day long."

"Is she too old to paddle?" Claud asked.

The girl's face was almost purple.

"Yes," the lady said, "I'm afraid there's nothing to do but leave her to her folly. Some day she'll wake up and it'll be too late."

"It never hurt anyone to smile," Mrs. Turpin said. "It just makes you feel better all own"

"Of course," the lady said sadly, "but there are just some people you can't tell anything to. They can't take criticism."

"If it's one thing I am," Mrs. Turpin said with feeling, "It's grateful. When I think who all I could have been besides myself and what all I got, a little of everything, and a good disposition besides, I just feel like shouting, "Thank you, Jesus, for making everything the way it is! It could have been different!" For one thing, somebody else could have got Claud. At the thought of this, she was flooded with gratitude and a terrible pang of joy ran through her. "Oh thank you, Jesus, Jesus, thank you!" she cried aloud.

The book struck her directly, over her left eye. It struck almost at the same instant that she realized the girl was about to hurl it. Before she could utter a sound, the raw face came crashing across the table toward her, howling. The girl's fingers sank like clamps the soft flesh of her neck. She heard the mother cry out and Claud shout, "Whoa!" There was an instant when she was certain that she was about to be in an earthquake.

All at once her vision narrowed and she saw everything as if it were happening in a small room far away, or as if she were looking at it through the wrong end of a telescope.

Claud's face crumpled and fell out of sight. The nurse ran in, then out, then again. Then the gangling figure of the doctor rushed out of the inner door. Magazines flew this way and that as the table turned over. The girl fell with a thud and Mrs. Turpin's vision suddenly reversed itself and she saw everything large instead of small. The eyes of the white-trashy woman were staring hugely at the floor. There the girl, held down on one side by the nurse and on the other by her mother, was wrenching and turning in their grasp. The doctor was kneeling astride her, trying to hold her arm down. He managed after a second to sink a long needle into it.

Mrs. Turpin felt entirely hollow except for her heart which swung from side to side as if it were agitated in a great empty drum of flesh.

"Somebody that's not busy call for the ambulance," the doctor said in the off-hand voice young doctors adopt for terrible occasions.

Mrs. Turpin could not have moved a finger. The old man who had been sitting next to her skipped nimbly into the office and made the call, for the secretary still seemed to be gone.

"Claud!" Mrs. Turpin called.

He was not in his chair. She knew she must jump up and find him but she felt like someone trying to catch a train in a dream, when everything moves in slow, motion and the faster you try to run the slower you go.

"Here I am," a suffocated voice, very unlike Claud's said. He was doubled up in the corner on the floor, pale as paper, holding his leg. She wanted to get up and go to him but she could not move. Instead, her gaze was drawn slowly downward to the churning face on the floor, which she could see over the doctor's shoulder.

The girl's eyes stopped rolling and focused on her. They seemed a much lighter blue than before, as if a door that had been tightly closed behind them was now open to admit light and air.

Mrs. Turpin's head cleared and her power of motion returned. She leaned forward until she was looking directly into the fierce brilliant eyes. There was no doubt in her mind that the girl did know her, know her in some intense and personal way, beyond time and place and condition. "What you got to say to me?" she asked hoarsely and held her breath, waiting, as for a revelation. The girl raised her head. Her gaze locked with Mrs. Turpin's. "Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog," she whispered. Her voice was low but clear. Her eyes burned for a moment as if she saw with pleasure that her message had struck its target.

Mrs. Turpin sank back in her chair.

After a moment the girl's eyes closed and she turned her head wearily to the side.

The doctor rose and handed the nurse the empty syringe. He leaned over and put both hands for a moment on the mother's shoulders, which were shaking. She was sitting on the floor, her lips pressed together, holding Mary Grace's hand in her lap. The girl's fingers were gripped like a baby's around her thumb. "Go on to the hospital," he said. "I'll call and make the arrangements."

"Now let's see that neck," he said in a jovial voice to Mrs. Turpin. He began to inspect her

neck with his first two fingers. Two little moon-shaped lines like pink fish bones were indented over her windpipe. There was the beginning of an angry red swelling above her eye. His fingers passed over this also. 'Lea' me be," she said thickly and shook him off. "See about Claud. She kicked him."

"I'll see about him in a minute," he said and felt her pulse. He was a thin grey-haired man, given to pleasantries. "Go home and have yourself a vacation the rest of the day," he said and patted her on the shoulder.

Quit your patten me, Mrs. Turpin growled to herself.

"And put an ice pack over that eye," he said. Then he went and squatted down beside Claud and looked at his leg. After a moment he pulled him up and Claud limped after him into the office.

Until the ambulance came, the only sounds in the room were the tremulous moans of the girl's mother, who continued to sit on the floor. The white-trash woman did not take her eyes off the girl. Mrs. Turpin looked straight ahead at nothing. Presently the ambulance drew up, a long dark shadow, behind the curtain. The attendants came in and set the stretcher down beside the girl and lifted her expertly onto it and carried her out. The nurse helped the mother gather up her things. The shadow of the ambulance moved silently -away and the nurse came back in the office.

"That there girl is going to be a lunatic, ain't she?" the white-trash woman asked the nurse, but the nurse kept on to the back and never answered her.

"Yes, she's going to be a lunatic," the white-trash woman said to the rest of them.

"Po' critter," the old woman murmured. The child's face was still in her lap. His eyes looked idly out over her knees. He had not moved during the disturbance except to draw one leg up under him.

"I thank Gawd," the white-trash woman said fervently, "I ain't a lunatic."

Claud came limping out and the Turpins went home.

As their pick-up truck turned into their own dirt road and made the crest of the hill, Mrs. Turpin gripped the window ledge and looked out suspiciously. The land sloped gracefully down through a field dotted with lavender weeds and at the start of the rise their small yellow frame house, with its little flower beds spread out around it like a fancy apron, sat primly in its accustomed place between two giant hickory trees. She would not have been startled to see a burnt wound between two blackened chimneys.

Neither of them felt like eating so they put on their house clothes and lowered the shade in the bedroom and lay down, Claud with his leg on a pillow and herself with a damp washcloth over her eye. The instant she was flat on her back, the image of a razor-backed hog with warts on its face and horns coming out behind its ears snorted into her head. She moaned, a low quiet moan.

"I am not," she said tearfully, "a wart hog. From hell." But the denial had no force. The girl's eyes and her words, even the tone of her voice, low but clear, directed only to her, brooked no repudiation. She had been singled out for the message, though there was trash in the room to whom it might justly have been applied. The full force of this fact struck her only

now. There was a woman there who was neglecting her own child but she had been overlooked. The message had been given to Ruby Turpin, a respectable, hardworking, church-going woman. The tears dried. Her eyes began to burn instead with wrath.

She rose on her elbow and the washcloth fell into her hand. Claud was lying on his back, snoring. She wanted to tell him what the girl had said. At the same time, she did not wish to put the image of herself as a wart hog from hell into his mind.

"Hey, Claud," she muttered and pushed his shoulder.

Claud opened one pale baby blue eye.

She looked into it warily.

He did not think about anything.

"Wha, whasit?" he said and closed the eye again.

"Nothing," she said. "Does your leg pain you?"

"Hurts like hell," Claud said "It'll quit terreckly," she said and lay back down. In a moment Claud was snoring again. For the rest of the afternoon they lay there. Claud slept. She scowled at the ceiling. Occasionally she raised her fist and made a small stabbing motion over her chest as if she was defending her innocence to invisible guests who were like the comforters of Job, reasonable-seeming but wrong.

About five-thirty Claud stirred. "Got to go after those niggers," he sighed, not moving.

She was looking straight up as if there were unintelligible handwriting on the ceiling. The protuberance over her eye had turned a greenish blue.

"Listen here," she said.

"What?"

"Kiss me."

Claud leaned over and kissed her loudly on the mouth. He pinched her side and their hands interlocked. Her expression of ferocious concentration did not change. Claud got up, groaning and growling, and limped off. She continued to study the ceiling.

She did not get up until she heard the pick-up truck coming back with the Negroes. Then she rose and thrust her feet in her brown oxfords, which she did not bother to lace, and stumped out onto the back porch and got her red plastic bucket. She emptied a tray of ice cubes into it and filled it half full of water and went out into the back yard.

Every afternoon after Claud brought the hands in, one of the boys helped him put out hay and the rest waited in the back of the truck until he was ready to take them home. The truck was parked in the shade under one of the hickory trees.

"Hi yawl this evening," Mrs. Turpin asked grimly, appearing with the bucket and the dipper.

There were three woman and a boy in the truck.

"Us doin nicely," the oldest woman said. "Hi you doin?" and her gaze stuck immediately on the dark lump on Mrs. Turpin's forehead. "You done fell down, ain't you?" she asked in a

solicitous voice. The old woman was dark and almost toothless. She had on an old felt hat of Claud's set back on her head. The other two women were younger and lighter and they both had new bright green sun hats. One of them had hers on her head; the other had taken hers off and the boy was grinning beneath it. Mrs. Turpin set the bucket down on the floor of the truck.

"Yawl hep yourselves," she said. She looked around to make sure Claud had gone. "No. I didn't fall down," she said, folding her arms. "It was something worse than that."

"Ain't nothing bad happen to YOU!" the old woman said. She said it as if they, all knew that Mrs. Turpin was protected in some special way by Divine Providence. "You just had you a little fall." "We were 'in town at the doctor's office for where the cow kicked Mr. Turpin," Mrs. Turpin said in a flat tone that indicated they could leave off their foolishness. "And there was this girl there. A big fat girl with her face all broke out. I could look at that girl and tell she was peculiar but I couldn't tell how. And me and her mama were just talking and going along and all of a sudden WHAM! She throws this big book she was reading at me and ..."

"Naw!" the old woman cried out. "And then she jumps over the table and commences to choke me."

"Naw!" they all exclaimed, "naw!"

"Hi come she do that?" the old woman asked. "What ail her?"

Mrs. Turpin only glared in front of her. "Somethin ail her," the old woman said. "They carried her off in an ambulance," Mrs. Turpin continued, "but before she went she was rolling on the floor and they were trying to hold her down to give her a shot and she said something to me." She paused. "You know what she said to me?"

"What she say," they asked.

"She said," Mrs. Turpin began, and stopped, her face very dark and heavy. The sun was getting whiter and whiter, blanching the sky overhead so that the leaves of the hickory tree were black in the face of it. She could not bring forth the words. "Something real ugly," she muttered.

"She sho shouldn't said nothin ugly, to you," the old woman said. "You so sweet. You the sweetest lady I know."

"She pretty too," the one with the hat on said

"And stout," the other one said. "I never knowed no sweeter white lady."

"That's the truth befo' Jesus," the old woman said. "Amen! You des as sweet and pretty as you can be."

Mrs. Turpin knew just exactly how much Negro flattery was worth and it added to her rage. "She said," she began again and finished this time with a fierce rush of breath, "that I was an old wart hog from hell."

There was an astounded silence.

"Where she at?" the youngest woman cried in a piercing voice. "Lemme see her. I'll kill her!"

"I'll kill her with you!" the other one cried.

"She b'long in the sylum" the old woman said emphatically.

"YOU the sweetest white lady I know."

"She pretty too," the other two said. "Stout as she can be and sweet. Jesus satisfied with her!"

"Deed he is," the old woman declared.

Idiots! Mrs. Turpin growled to herself. YOU could never say anything intelligent to a nigger. YOU could talk at them but not with them. "Yawl ain't drunk your water," she said shortly. "Leave the bucket in the truck when you're finished with it. I got more to do than just stand around and pass the time of day," and she moved off and into the house.

She stood for a moment in the middle of the kitchen. The dark protuberance over her eye looked like a miniature tornado cloud which might any moment sweep across the horizon of her brow. Her lower lip protruded dangerously. She squared her massive shoulders. Then she marched into the front of the house and out the side door and started down the road to the pig parlor. She had the look of a woman going single-handed, weaponless, into battle.

The sun was a deep yellow now like a harvest moon and was riding westward very fast over the far tree line as if it meant to catch the hogs before she did. The road was rutted and she kicked several good-sized stones out of her path as she strode along. The pig parlor was on a little knoll at the end of a lane that ran off from the side of the barn. It was a square of concrete as large as a small room, with a board fence about four feet high around it. The concrete floor sloped slightly so that the hog wash could drain off into a trench where it was carried to the field for fertilizer. Claud was standing on the outside, on the edge of the concrete, hanging onto the top board, hosing down the floor inside. The hose was connected to the faucet of a water trough nearby.

Mrs. Turpin climbed up beside him and glowered down at the hogs inside. There were seven long-snouted bristly shoats in it-tan with liver-colored spots-and an old sow a few weeks off from farrowing. She was lying on her side grunting. The shoats were running about shaking themselves like idiot children, their little slit pig eyes searching the floor for anything left. She had read that pigs were the most intelligent animal. She doubted it. They were supposed to be smarter than dogs. There had even been a pig astronaut. He had performed his assignment perfectly but died of a heart attack afterwards because they left him in his electric suit, sitting upright throughout his examination when naturally, a hog should be on all fours.

A-gruntin and a-rootin and a-groanin.

"Gimme that hose," she said, yanking it away from Claud. "Go on and carry, them niggers home and then get off that leg."

"You look like you might have swallowed a mad dog," Claud observed, but he got down and limped off. He paid no attention to her humors.

Until he was out of earshot, Mrs. Turpin stood on the side of the pen, holding the hose and pointing the stream of water at the hind quarters of any shoat that looked as if it might try to lie down. When he had had time to get over the hill, she turned her head slightly and her wrathful eyes scanned the path. He was nowhere in sight. She turned back again and seemed

to gather herself up. Her shoulders rose and she drew in her breath.

"What do you send me a message like that for?" she said in a low fierce voice, barely above a whisper but with the force of a shout in its concentrated fury. "How am I a hog and me? How am I saved and from hell too?" Her free fist was knotted and with the other she gripped the hose, blindly pointing the stream of water in and out of the eye of the old sow whose outraged squeal she did not hear.

The pig parlor commanded a view of the back pasture where their twenty beef cows were gathered around the haybales Claud and the boy had put out. The freshly cut pasture sloped down to the highway. Across it was their cotton field and beyond that a dark green dusty wood which they owned as well. The sun was behind the wood, very red, looking over the paling of trees like a farmer inspecting his own hogs.

"Why me?" she rumbled. "It's no trash around here, black or white, that I haven't given to. And break my back to the bone every day working. And do for the church."

She appeared to be the right size woman to command the arena before her. "How am I a hog? she demanded. "Exactly how am I like them?" and she jabbed the stream of water at the shoats. "There was plenty of trash there. It didn't have to be me.

"If you like trash better, go get yourself some trash then," she railed. "You could have made me trash. Or a nigger. If trash is what you wanted, why didn't you make me trash?" She shook her fist with the hose in it and a watery snake appeared momentarily in the air. "I could quit working and take it easy and be filthy," she growled "Lounge about the sidewalks all day drinking root beer. Dip snuff and spit in every puddle and have it all over my face. I could be nasty.

"Or you could have made me a nigger. It's too late for me to be a nigger," she said with deep sarcasm, "but I could act like one. Lay down in the middle of the road and stop traffic. Roll on the ground."

In the deepening light everything was taking on a mysterious hue. The pasture was growing a particular glassy green and the streak of the highway had turned lavender. She braced herself for a final assault and this time her voice rolled out over the pasture. "Go on," she yelled, "call me a hog! Call me a hog again. From hell. Call me a wart hog from hell. Put that bottom rail on top. There'll still be a top and bottom!"

A garbled echo returned to her.

A final surge of fury shook her and she roared, "Who do you think you are?"

The color of everything, field and crimson sky, burned for a moment with a transparent intensity. The question carried over the pasture and across the highway and the cotton field and returned to her clearly, like an answer from beyond the wood.

She opened her mouth but no sound came out of it.

A tiny truck, Claud's, appeared on the highway, heading rapidly out of sight. Its gears scraped thinly. It looked like a child's toy. At any moment a bigger truck might smash into it and scatter Claud's and the niggers' brains all over the road.

Mrs. Turpin stood there, her gaze fixed on the highway, all her muscles rigid, until in five or

six minutes the truck reappeared, returning. She waited until it had had time to turn into their own road. Then like a monumental statue coming to life, she bent her head slowly and gazed, as if through the very heart of mystery, down into the pig parlor at the hogs. They had settled all in one corner around the old sow who was grunting softly. A red glow suffused them. They appeared to pant with a secret life.

Until the sun slipped finally behind the tree line, Mrs. Turpin remained there with her gaze bent to them as if she were absorbing some abysmal life-giving knowledge. At last she lifted her head. There was only a purple streak in the sky, cutting through a field of crimson and leading, like an extension of the highway, into the descending dusk. She raised her hands from the side of the pen in a gesture hieratic and profound. A visionary light settled in her eyes. She saw the streak as a vast swinging bridge extending upward from the earth through a field of living fire. Upon it a vast horde of souls were tumbling toward heaven. There were whole companies of white trash, clean for the first time in their lives, and bands of black niggers in white robes, and battalions of freaks and lunatics shouting and clapping and leaping like frogs. And bringing up the end of the procession was a tribe of people whom she recognized at once as those who, like herself and Claud, had always had a little of everything and the given wit to use it right. She leaned forward to observe them closer. They were marching behind the others with great dignity, accountable as they had always been for good order and common sense and respectable behavior. They, alone were on key. Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces even their virtues were being burned away. She lowered hands and gripped the rail of the hog pen, her eyes small but fixed unblinkingly on what lay ahead. In a moment the vision faded but she remained where she was.

At length she got down and turned off the faucet and in her slow way on the darkening path to the house. In woods around her the invisible cricket choruses had struck up, but what she heard were the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah.