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Human Freedom


A careful historical and theological account of the distinction between “freedom of indifference” and “freedom for excellence,” this seminal work helps readers see human freedom as much more than mere “rational” choice making capacity.


“Freedom for excellence” coheres with natural law (participation in divine law); or, “real [human] autonomy” = “participated theonomy.”


This is a more concise version of Pinckaers’ great work The Sources of Christian Ethics. It is arguably an easier read.


Fully-free human action coheres with God-given human nature; or, “Freedom for excellence” = theonomy + human autonomy.


Rather than a reduction of morality to duty-bound behavior, the Christian-moral-life-fully-lived-out amounts to people most freely and happily flourishing in full accord with their God-given+Grace-elevated nature.

This is the essay out of which our poster presentation has evolved. In it, “freedom of indifference” and “freedom for excellence” are distinguished via two real-world cases, one in which a cancer patient voluntarily commits a rational act of suicide (Jo Roman) and another in which suicide is never considered (Christi Chronowski). For widely-distributed accounts of Roman’s case, see: *New York Times*, 17 June 1979; and *Newsweek*, 2 July 1979. For the little-known and only other published reflection on Chronowski’s case, see: Chronowski, R. (1996). “Christi’s Story: A True Marian Success,” *Signs and Wonders for Our Times*, 8(4), 21-7.

**Human Dignity**


Concepts of “dignity” and the light they shine upon embryo-destructive research are explicated. These concepts are very helpful in analyzing whether or not assisted suicide (AKA “aid in dying”) grounded in “death with dignity” truly make sense.


Human dignity is best understood in light of human nature and human destiny.


The distinctions between objects as means and those as ends, and the application of intrinsic value and extrinsic value to both categories, is implicitly linked to discussions of human dignity in light of Kantian theories on human value.


“Attributed dignity” and “intrinsic dignity” are distinguished and applied to a real-world end-of-life clinical case, an implicit critique of the contemporary concept “death with dignity.”


“Intrinsic dignity” and “attributed dignity” are historically traced and defined. Although assisted suicide grounded in the contemporary concept “death with dignity” is not directly addressed, this distinction sheds light upon its moral significance.


The two definitions of dignity are differentiated apropos of an understanding of kinds, personhood, and moral excellence. Also, the implications of intrinsic dignity upon human rights are explicated.