Apologetics PODCAST SERIES

EP. 34 : The Moral Life 3: Specific and controversial topics

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*Preliminary note on this episode : We are going to discuss some sensitive topics about Catholic morals teaching that are not really fit for younger audiences without parental supervision and previewing, so as to explain and help younger viewers understand in a virtuous way that helps to prevent sin.*

*Nevertheless these topics are frequently asked questions, and especially on issues of life and sexuality, the Catholic Church’s moral teaching stands in stark contrast to the world. Thus, it is important to address these topics.*

*Discretion is advised.*

# Review on Catholic morality

* Morality or ethics is the study that asks the question of what is the standard by which men should rule their actions, and then compares actual actions to those standards.
* Moral principles are objective and rooted in the Divine Law
  + We speak specifically of a Natural Law
    - This is merely the relationship between God and Man, and Man and the rest of Creation that exists as a result of the Nature of God, and the Nature of Man.
    - When man follows his nature, he acts morally. When he does not he acts immorally,
  + There is also Divine Positive Law which are arbitrary free choices that do not relate to man’s nature or the nature of God, but extend the Natural Law.
    - e.g. because of the nature of God as Creator and of Man as a Rational Creature, worship is demanded by the natural law in the form of a sacrifice with a priesthood.
    - That this sacrifice will occur in the form of the Mass (or previously in the form of the Temple sacrifices), and that Sunday (or previously Saturday) is a day that will be reserved for obligatory attendance at this, is a free choice of God
* The Natural Law is all about finality, purpose or the goal of man.
  + When he acts according to his nature, he pursues his proper goal.
  + When he does not act according to his nature, he move away from his goal.
  + In specific actions, “moral or immoral” can be determined on if the action and related functions of man lead to, or at least do not impede the purpose of those functions.
* Feelings, our ambitions, our opinions, our passions have almost nothing to do with morality or whether an action is moral or not.
* It is only a question of what man’s purpose (end/goal) is, and whether a particular action helps man to achieve this purpose, or impedes it.
* Thus the fundamental axiom : “Do good, avoid evil”.
* There are three aspect to a moral action:
  + **the moral object** (the thing to which the action naturally and firstly tends) — *finis operis*
  + **the circumstances of the action** (the surrounding situation and character of persons)
  + **the purpose or end which is sought.** (the intention of the agent) — *finis operantis*
  + All aspects need to be good for an action to be moral.
  + The morality is primarily set by the moral object, then the circumstances and intention
    - A good intention cannot vitiate an evil action
    - An evil intention poisons any otherwise moral action, making it immoral.

# Catholic sexual morality : In General

First, an **Objection** : *“Traditional Christians always talk about sex and rules. They are obsessed with sex, and probably because they repress their desires are often deviants hiding their real crimes with virtue signaling.”*

* “Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.” (Is 5.20)
  + This was recently put on display with the new Speaker of the House, who in a public forum in 2022 mentioned that he and his family use accountability software to protect themselves online, and was mocked for this protection being accused of being a sexual deviant sharing his “porn habits” with his teenage son.
    - Those who welcome all manner of deviancy are quick to label Christians as deviants when trying to protect themselves and others from their passions and concupiscence.
    - At the same time it must be admitted that plenty of deviants and sinners exist amongs Christians, and often are hypocrites, demanding rules they do not keep.
  + The reason the Church even speaks about matters sexual is that:
    - They are very closely tied to man’s nature (the propagation of the species is a instinctual drive in animals, and man is a rational animal),
    - Man’s nature is fundamentally wounded and the passions (appetites of the soul), often seek out things in a disordered manner,
    - The pleasure attached to sexual actions (physically and psychologically), allow the passions to bring men to a point where they lose their reason seeking after this pleasure,
    - Plenty of historical examples show how quickly sexual license can cause men to deviate from the right path:
      * **2 Kings (Samuel) 11** : David (the man after God’s own Heart), who shirked his duty of fighting to stay home and lounge about, commits adultery with Bathsheba (Bethsabee), and to hide it, disturbs the battle to call in her husband, then arranges for his murder.
      * **3 Kings (1 Kings)** : Solomon’s 700 wives and 300 concubines (many pagans who adored Moloch), lead him to idolatry and to child sacrifice to Moloch.
      * **Henry VIII** : To satisfy his desire for a son (his venereal diseases and known liberty with women, were likely part of the reason several of his children died before birth), he divorces, breaks from the Church, creates a new church, martyrs many Catholics, destroys monasteries, murders his own wife, and sets up England to spread a false religion throughout the world in the coming centuries.
      * **Modern Times** : From 1950s “Leave it to Beaver” family to a situation where to satisfy one’s physical and psychological pleasure, people undergo life-changing surgeries, chemical treatments, etc.
  + **Response** : The reason the Church speaks clearly on sexual morality is not because it is obsessed with the topic, but because ***people*** are obessed and possessed by their passions and sins on this level easily direct men away from their eternal goal, with often very permanent effects.
* Secondly, while moral theolgians will draw out very specific details about sexual matters to help identify and therefore prevent or repair for sins, the basic moral doctrine is very simple : Natural Law, and Finality
  + These are ***not really religious doctrines***.
    - Thus “You believe that contraception is wrong” is not really true.
    - We do not *believe* this, we know and accept the moral doctrine because contraception *is* wrong.
    - The doctrine does not make it wrong, it is wrong, and thus the Church teaches us it is wrong, to help prevent sin.
    - It is the natural law that can show that contraception (and other sexual immorality) is immoral.
    - When revelation (Scripture, the infallible teaching of the Church confirming what was revealed, etc.) points out the immorality of something (like contraception), it can become something that must be held by Faith, but that is for those who do not see that it is wrong, and are just relying on that “guard rail” we spoke of in the last few episodes.
    - The highest form of knowledge is by vision, then science (reasoning), then by faith, then opinion. If we see something is true or reason to its truth, this exceeds faith and belief.

**The Natural Law and Catholic Doctrines on Sexual Morality**

***There are two genders/sexes***

* While it is a controversial point today, biologically, the human species exists in two sexes (male and female).
  + There are certain individuals that have non-standard genetics, but even then such individuals always tend to show biological characteristics clearly identifying them as male or female.
    - * + 46,XY or 46,XX are normal male & female
        + 45, X0 is Turner’s Syndrome (female, often infertile)
        + 46,XXY is Klinefelter Syndrome (male, infertile)
        + 47, XYY is Jacobs Syndrome (male, quasi-normal)
        + 47,XXX is Trisomy X (female, quasi-normal)
        + Rule of thumb : Y = male, lack of Y = female
      * Very few mosaic/chimeric individuals exist that show biologically-relevant characteristics making a male-female determination dubious.
        + Typical number for intersex given based on Anne Fausto-Sterling is 1.7% of all births, but as Dr. Leonard Sax points out, this includes at least 1.5% of all births who are genetically normal, but have late-onset Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia and other conditions the vast majority of doctors do not consider “intersex”.
        + Sax says that truly intersex/ambiguous sex persons represent about 0.018% of births.
      * Even if it were 1.7%, the existence of such a small number of such individuals is a demonstration of this being a deviation from the normal order of two identifiable sexes.

***These sexes are biologically complementary***

* + These two sexes are deigned in such a way that they reproduce the species by sexual intercourse, where the man and woman each provide complementary gametes, and the child that is conceived will be nourished and grow until birth in the woman’s womb. (minor premise)

***Syllogism***

* + *(Minor premise)* ***Based on the natural effects of the use of the sexual functions (their finality or purpose) these organs are intended principally for the procreation of children****. (minor premise)*
    - *There are other effects such as pleasure, the fact that this pleasure (plus the release of chemicals such as oxytocin, endorphens, dopamine, etc.) helps mates bond, that the release of this pleasure helps calm the passions for a time. However, these are clearly not the primary purpose of these actions. So aside from the purpose of procreation, any other fuctions and natural effects are secondary to this finality and purpose. (Ad minorem)*
  + (Major Premise) The moral object (the thing to which the action primarily and natural tends) sets the morality of an act, not the circumstances or intention of the agent, and the moral object of sexual acts is procreation.
  + **Conclusion : Sexual acts which, of their nature, tend towards procreation (i.e. they do not impede procreation) *can* be morally good, provided other factors such as the circumstances and intention of the agent are good.**
  + **Contrafactual: Sexual acts which of their nature impede procreation are always morally evil, no matter the other factors.**

***Conclusions from this general principle***

* + **Contraception is immoral**, *even if it is not abortifacient*
    - Drugs, chemicals, devices, or techniques which intentionally prevent pregnancy make the sexual act sterile, thus they violate the primary purpose and nature of sexual intercourse
  + **Masturbation and other acts that provoke sexual pleasure outside of intercourse are immoral**, *even by those who are married*
    - Pleasure exists as an effect of the marital act to encourage intercourse and helps to produce the other secondary effects, but pleasure is not the purpose of the action
    - Provoking intentional pleasure while preventing the procreative end (hence why this was once called “the solitary sin”) separates an effect and the act from its purpose.
    - This is why it is considered a “sin against nature”
  + **Homosexual actions or heterosexual actions which are not procreative are immoral**, *even by those who are married*
    - The principles are exactly the same as above
    - Scholion : Note well that a homosexual *inclination* or *attraction* is disordered because by it one *tends* toward immorality, but a tendency is not a sin because it is not a human action
      * *Inclinations* or *attractions* are not *actions*.
      * Homosexual *inclinations* like other disordered attractions can be willfully refused and immoral actions avoided, gaining merit in resisting the disordered passions, just like for heterosexuals who fight to preseve their own chastity against their own disordered passions.
      * Homosexual *actions* (because freely chosen *actions*) are intrinsically immoral.
  + ***Note well that we have not based any of these conclusions on revelation.***
    - *These conclusions flow from the use of simple human reason considering the natural law, the nature of the human body, the purpose of human sexuality and sexual acts.*
    - *So, the Church teaches these things because they are immoral. Church teaching reflects reality, it does not create reality.*

***Objections to these conclusion***

* + **“If the marital act is for procreation, then intercourse in couples that cannot conceieve must be immoral, plus not every time a couple has relations do they conceive. But the Church doesn’t teach this, so your principle is really hypocritical.”**
    - The Church doesn’t teach that, correct, because the principle is not what the objector thinks it is.
    - The principle is that sexual actions that do not impede procreation *can* be moral, but there are more factors to consider to see if they are moral.
    - The fact that conception is almost certainly impossible due to age, medical conditions, current pregnancy, or the infrequency of ovulation still tend toward procreation. The effect will not happen, but the couple is not introducing willfully something that impeded this end, so the act still *tends* towards this end.
      * I am not very good at hunting.
      * Going hunting *tends* towards killing a deer and feeding the priests at the priory.
      * I rarely will kill a deer, because of my being a bad shot, half-blind, not having a good bow or rifle.
      * Still, when I go out into the with a rifle or bow, I *aim* to kill deer. I may happen I do or I do not, but the end is still sought, whether or not it is reached.
      * Married couples who have normal marital relations, open to life, do something moral, even if conception does not occur, or is unlikely to occur
        + Note the biblical stories of conception in old age, or after a long time sterile
        + Also note that some couples outside of biblical stories conceieve well after what seems like the end of child-bearing years, or after many years of sterility.
        + That the primary end is not prevented is sufficient to make the moral object good.
    - To extend the analogy a bit on the reason we even need to address these kinds of matters: Sitting Bull, the great Buffalo hunter (and Catholic), once saw some Lakota youth riding around in a fenced-in field, chasing Buffalo, thinking they were hunting. He knew he was the last true Lakota, because that was not “hunting”
      * + In a certain sense, the moral understanding of family life as being for procreation and education of children is the traditional way. Spouses have regular relations, children are produced and raised. There is no obsession about sex in this context. It is just a normal part of family life that is beautiful in the right context.
        + Only when this traditional and natural approach is broken do people start to do things which are artifical and obsess about sex, all while thinking that they are “hunting” just like in the past.
    - A side point here also, the Church teaches (following natural law) that those who are impotent (not just sterile), cannot contract marriage, because they cannot give away the rights to acts proper to generation if they cannot perform those actions.
      * The sterile can give the right, because they have use of their organs, even if they *per accidens* cannot conceive
      * The impotent cannot give a right, because they do not have the use of their organs that are tied to that right. They *per se* cannot have relations, unless the impotence is solved.
  + **“You say contraception is immoral, but what about if a mother’s life will be endangered by pregnancy. Are you saying that they can’t have sexual relations or pleasure?”**
    - Contraception is this case is still immoral, because the circumstances are not the first consideration for morality. The moral object is.
    - Even married couples are called to be chaste. They normally live that chaste life through marital relations which are ordered towards procreation and provide the secondary benefits like a mutual union, a queiting of their passions, etc.
    - Sometimes a greater sacrifice is asked by God of certain souls, but in such cases, corresponding graces to live a chaste life are possible.
    - It does seem unfair, but often tough situations accepted and offered well make geneous souls both naturally and supernaturally.

***There family is necessary for children***

* Note that the more clear conclusion from the natural law does not exclude fornication, adultery, or divorce, and yet we say that these are immoral as well.
* Adultery is an easier case, because it is both immoral sexually, but also immoral because of injustice to the person to whom one is married.
  + Marriage is a contract by which one gives totally and exclusively the rights over their body to acts which tend towards procreation.
  + Once given because exclusive and totally give, it cannot be taken back, nor shared.
  + Thus adultery is an injustice by violating one’s word and this contract.
  + So also divorce is impossible because the contract is total and exclusive and life-long. That isn’t so clearly seen at first, but will be with some more thought, as will the immorality of fornication and another issue with adultery:
    - When a child is conceived, it will normally have 9 months of gestation, during which a mother often is not as able to function as she normally would when not pregnant.
      * She can easily get sick and more easily injured.
      * She needs more nutrition which historically meant more gathering or hunting which is difficult to do when pregnant.
      * In other words, a woman when pregnant will have difficulties that make her normally need to rely on others for help, particuarly her spouse, who has a vested interest in the child’s welfare, but without the same difficulties.
    - Once born, the child is naturally quite helpless, not as instinctual as other animals, and takes a very long time to pass through infancy and childhood before it can direct its own actions, and life as an adult. Sexual maturity also takes a relatively long time compared with other animals.
    - Further, because of man’s rational nature, he learns not by instict or sense memory, but by his reasoning, and to do this he needs examples. Boys and girls are better formed into men and women when they have these qualities exemplified to them by parents, one male, one female.
    - A stable family where a mother and father who conceieve these children are present for their nurture, growth and development seems to be relatively necessary, and this an extension of the natural law.

***Conclusions from this secondary principle***

* + **Fornication is immoral, as are acts which tend towards this (outside of marriage)**
    - Sexual intercourse outside of marriage risks pregnancy and bearing a child outside of the naturally stable and supportive environment that human nature demands.
    - This is not so obvious as the earlier points, because it seems like larger extended families often can take care of a child and raise it, but studies bear out the harm and instability of broken families and out-of-wedlock children, and that they do not fare as well, generally.
    - Obviously, contraceptive fornication is immoral from the earlier principles
    - If fornication is immoral, then imperfect actions (passionate kissing, impure touches, or anything that intentially arouses the passions) are also immoral to the degree that they tend towards fornication.
      * Recall the moral object is the primary determinant of morality, only then circumstances and intention
      * The primary purpose of passionate kissing, and sensual touching, or what arouses the passions is to lead towards marital relations
      * But, for the unmarried, marital relations are immoral …
  + **Adultery is immoral, as are acts which tend towards this**
    - For the same reasons as above, adultery is not only contrary to justice, but risks a child born outside of a stable family
    - Bringing the child into the family will cause harm to the common life of husband and wife, because this child belongs in part to another parent, and represents the infidelity of the one spouse. This will war against the unity of the spouses, and introduces a third party with an interest in the child.
    - For the same reason imperfect actions, even flirting with someone when married, is immoral.
  + **Divorce is immoral**
    - Divorce breaks the stable relationship a child needs to be raised properly
    - Remarriage wars against the notion of marriage, and now introduces non-interetsed parties into the mix, disturbing the stability of the children.
  + **Surrogacy is immoral**
    - The marital act is not only ordered towards children, but secondary ends as well. Allowing a surrogate to carry a child that is not her own, certainly damages the unity of the spouses, and introudces a third part that had a major role in the child’s life
    - Surrogacy either requires adultery or masturbation to conceive the child, so already starts with immoral acts, and thus cannot be moral.
  + **Pornography is immoral**
    - The marital act is meant to be an intimate act for pro-creation, and has a natural sacredness about it.
    - Publicizing it and sharing it is grossly immoral and unnatural
    - Of course, there is added to most pornography unnatural actions, adultery, contraception, human trafficing, prostitution, and a myriad of other evils.
    - Pornographic actors often are led by their shameful life and the wounds it causes them to drug and other addictions to try to deaded the psychological pain.
    - Consumption of pornography promotes these evils.

**The Natural Law and Catholic Doctrines on Life**

***Who is the owner or lord of life?***

* This is a key preliminary, because it will answer a great deal of objections.
* For this we need to go back to one of the arguments for the existence of God : the Second Way of St. Thomas Aquinas, the argument from the cause of a thing’s existence.
  + Anything that does not have its existence of itself, must receive it from another, and this is called its “efficient cause”
    - (Something that does not simply exists, but have been given existence from something else)
  + This efficient cause must either be a first cause (it simply exists), or must itself be caused by something else (it received its existence from something else)
  + Noting can be it’s own cause, so there can be no circular chain of causes
  + The chain of causes cannot be infinite
    - Like a chain holding up a chandiler, it must be anchored and have a first link
    - All middle links could be reduced to a single linking chain, so you have a first, middle and last link
    - Saying, the chain is infinite, does not explain the chain at all
    - No matter how long, we must have a first link, so an infinite chain of causes is impossible.
  + If there is not an infinite chain of causes there must be a first cause, and this first casuse must be uncaused (or it is just a middle link).
  + That uncaused cause is God
  + God is thus, ultimately responsible for Creation and giving existence to anything that exists apart from Himself.
* That will then show us that God must be the Master of existence and life (which is just a kind of existence) is God’s to give or not give.
* In other words, only God and those to whom God grants it, are masters over life (and thus death).
* Without the mandate of God (either from Natural Law or Divine Positive Law), no one may take life, not even his own, as this would be theft of God’s rights

***Objection to this line of argument***

* + **“The God of the Old Testament told the Hebrews to wipe out and massacre everyone in certain places, even women and children who were not guilty of any crime. How could a loving God do this?”**
    - This is not really an objection to the idea of God being Lord of Life, but an argument from emotion, or our own limited perception of Justice.
    - Nevertheless, it’s a common objection (and distraction), because it does seem like the Israelites did commit genocide at God’s command
    - First, let us presume that it was God who commanded this:
      * God is the master of life, and it belongs to Him to decided when a man will live and when he will die, and allow certain means of these things to happen
      * Many people will die, innocent, at a humanly-inopportune moment, but as a result will save their souls.
        + Example of St. Thomas More, who had some very humanistic ideas, and some of his good friends like Erasmus would take those ideas out to heresy. His martyrdom may have saved him from a similar end.
      * We do not have the full context, but do know that certain of those who were killed were practicing all manner of unnatural evil and idolatry, so were justly to be punished.
    - Secondly, let us consider that perhaps the Hebrews embelished what God was asking for, or acted on their own
      * We do know that there was a tendency to go too far, for instance with Simeon and Levi using circumcision as a weapon to exact vengence on Sichem. They were punished for their excess and sacrilege.
      * We also know that the Israelites sometimes did not follow through with God’s commands, thus leaving some idolaters in Israel (thus how Solomon came upon the cult of Moloch).
      * In such a case, God would still be master of life and death, but allowing erring people to commit immoral actions, but willing the salvation of certain souls, or allowing some immoral people to exact punishment for Him
        + Atilla was labeled “Scourge of God” for his being an instrument of punishment allowed by God
        + Julian the Apostate, in trying to destroy what he thought was the Church, attacked the Arians, putting Catholic bishops in their seas, and saving the Church from full-blown heresy.
    - God is the master of life, and it belongs to Him to decided when a man will live and when he will die
    - Again, note, we have not invoked any revelation (even if we have used religious examples) to prove this. Natural Law and reasoning establish that only the Creator has dominion over life.

***What role does man play vis-à-vis life?***

* As Creatures, men are given existence which they are no owed.
  + It is impossible that men could merit something before they existed
  + Even afterwards, they can only merit of their own (and so be owed a reward) when they do something without the help of God, but this is impossible.
  + Even to do something worthy of merit (natural or supernatural) requires the help of God.
* Men are, at best, stewards of the body and life they have been given
  + They must use and preserve these things as God wishes them to be used and preserved
  + When they agregate to themselves rights of an owner, when they are merely a manager, this is an injustice towards God.
* Men have been given life in a unique form unlike the other animals: God has created man with a rational soul which is therefore eternal.
  + He must be mindful of both the duties realted to bodily life (which ends at some point)
  + He must also be mindful of the life of his soul (which will continue forever)
    - Again, we have not cited revelation for this. Aristotle comes to the conclusion that we will contemplate God for eternity as a separated soul!
    - Where revelation is needed (and based on Aristotle what is revealed seems reasonable and beautiful) is to understand that this next life is not mere contemplation of God on a natural level, but a face-to-face vision with supernatural happiness.
    - Either considering an Aristotelian end, or a supernatural end, man will not be able to properly contemplate God if he violates his nature. There is harm to the soul by misue of the body and soul.
* Man acts as a steward, not owner of his own life, body and soul.
* As a social creature, he also is meant to have care for the life, body and soul of others.

***Conclusions from these principle***

* + **Murder (unjust killing of an innocent) is always immoral**
    - Man does not own another’s life, and so has no right to take it
    - The issue is what constitutes “innocent” and “unjust” so what is “murder”
      * When someone threatens oneself or another with deadly force, they are no longer “innocent” and this action is “unjust” so self-defense or defense of a third party is not “murder”
      * When a Just War is being fought the enemy combatants (not civilians) are no longer “innocent” because they are soldier of an “unjust” attack *when they are in combat*.
        + Fighting against them in battle to the point of death is not “murder”
        + Executing prisoners is “murder” because these soldiers are no longer a threat nor acting “unjustly”.
      * Capital Punishment is not “murder” when it is enacted by the State, after legitimate judicial conviction with clear evidence of a crime, and is proprortional to the crime committed. Criminals are not “innocent”.
        + Since John Paul II there has been a movement in Catholic circles to suggest that the Death Penalty is “inadmissible”.
        + Longstanding Catholic doctrine, Scripture (Gn 9.6: “Whosoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed”), and even the words of Christ, “You would not have power [to put me to death] were it not given to you from above,” (Jn 19.11), support that God has granted to the State the authority to execute criminals where there is a serious crime.
        + John Paul II explained there was a prudential side that suggested that the Death Penalty was no longer necessary because criminals could be incarcerated for life more easily.

This is not the reason for the Death Penalty, though.

Punishment has four effects :

Prevention of future crimes,

Restitution to society for the harm do to the common good and society,

Reform of the criminal

Deterence from others committing the crime.

The argument of John Paul II and others ignores these goods that flow from punishment, even the death penalty, which is especially useful for the reform of the criminal (who facing death, often takes stock of his sins and wants to make things right with His Creator before his death).

Dr Edward Feser has a very good treatment of this subject in *By Man Shall His Blood Be Shed*.

* + **Abortion and Infanticide (unjust killing of an unborn child) is always immoral and a particularly grave kind of murder**
    - The principles are the same as above for murder, but we should be clear what we mean by abortion here, because traditionally the term was much wider
      * Abortion is the intentional and direct killing of a child in the womb through physical, chemical, or other means.
      * Abortion is not an indirect killing, thus salpingectomy to remove a fallopian tube or part of it due to an ectopic pregnancy, or a hysterectomy for a cancerous uterus, indirectly killing the child within, who we would save if it were possible, is not murder.
        + This is an example of double effect : save the mother’s life by treating a disease, which has a secondary unintended effect of the death of the child.
        + While the effect of a chemical or surgical procedure to kill the child is the same as the salpingectomy or hysterectomy, the moral object and intention are quite different.
        + The abortion kills the child to treat the mother. The death of the child brings about the heath of the mother.
        + The salpingectomy or hysterectomy treats the mother, bringing about her health. The secondary effect of this allows the child’s death, but does not directly cause it.
        + It is such things why we can say that an abortion is never necessary, because treatment options for problems do exist that do not directly kill the developing child.
    - Abortion is a far worse kind of murder, because it perverts the natural maternal and parental relationship of care that is meant to exist.
      * This is another reason it is a violation of the natural law
      * It is also why it causes serious psychological damage to mothers, who never truly heal
    - Because of the hidden nature of an abortion, the Church has attached an automatic excommunication to its performance to emphasize how wrong it is.
      * The automatic excommunication requires that a particular abortion actually happen, so would not extend to those who vote for abortion or politicians who favor it. They could (and probably should) be excommunicated, but it would not be automatic.
      * The automatic excommunication touches anyone who was in the direct line of causality : the mother, doctor, nurses and staff who helped, the husband/consort who encouraged/drove/did not try to stop the procedure, etc.
      * One must know of the penalty to receive it.
  + **Suicide is immoral**
    - The principles are the same as above for murder, but applied to self.
    - There is a duty to protect one’s life and health within reason.
    - Here, directly killing oneself is immoral. This is different from allowing oneself to die (which follows the double effect principles), such as Michael Mansoor, the Catholic and Medal of Honor winner, who jumped on a grenade to save his comrades in Ramadi in 2006.
    - It should be noted that very frequently tied to suicide is mental illness or psychological wounds that dimish or even remove any culpability, because they remove the willfullness and necessary knowledge of the evil.
  + **Asissted Suicide/Euthanasia is immoral**
    - The principles are the same as above for suicide
    - A common objection is that death will soon happen in many cases, and there is great pain. That does not change the fact that one is a steward, not an owner of his life.
    - It can be seen that when approved for the most exceptional cases, eventually those in psychological pain will be granted the license to kill themselves.
  + **Use of fetal tissue/stem cells is immoral**
    - These cells are obtained by the direct killing of a child.
    - Use of vaccines, drugs, and treatments developed from these is a more nuanced question, and also involves other bioethical questions we do not have time to treat here, but to outline a few general principles:
      * Certain of these require this tissue and cells for production. These are in the direct line of causality, and so, even if very distant, they are tied to this continuing evil.
      * Certain of these were developed from this tissue and cells, but are now produced without them. While we must object to their production, use would not be as closely tied to a continuing evil.
      * Others were tested using this tissue and cells. This is evil and to be condemned, but does not touch on the direct causal line, so use of the treatment only very remotely is tied to any evil.
  + **Organ Transplantation is often immoral**
    - In order to preserve most organs from someone who is donating them (particularly hearts and lungs, or other organs without which one cannot live for any amount of time), a person must be kept alive.
    - Brain death is not the moment when the soul has left the body, and so removing necessary organs causes the death of the donor, and is murder.
    - This is where Catholic bioethics, by setting out principles, may advance science and provide a moral way to preserve organs after death, or promote growing these organs to transplant and replace a malfunctioning organ.
    - As generous as it seems to give away one’s organs (and it would be if it could be done without causing the death of the donor), it would be immoral to give permission that this happen, if one knew it would result in his murder. This would be, in a sense, a form of suicide/euthanasia.
    - Organs that are doubled, or where a portion could be taken (liver), or that would not cause death are generally acceptable.

***An additional principle and conclusions***

* In addition to the preservation of life, we also have a duty to preserve our human life, that is to say, our rationality.
* Man has intellect (reason) and will, and he cannot forego the use of these unnaturally without serious reason.
* We say unnaturally, because when we fall asleep, we clearly lose use of them.
* As a result of these, we can draw out a few more judgements
  + **Use of intoxicating substances which cause the loss of reason or impair reason are moral, only for a serious reason**
    - Use of medical treatments that cause intoxication, drunkenness, a high, paralysis, unconciousness, etc. can be moral through double effect
      * The loss of the reason is not desired and temporary, allowing a more painful treatment to be undertaken that is impossible without them.
      * For example, to treat methanol poisoning, at least one method involves the patient being given ethanol (drinking alcohol), to the point of intoxication.
      * This is not a self-prescription, but a real medical need, identified by medical professionals.
    - Use of drink or drugs recreationally can be moral if these do not cause loss or impariment of reason
      * Drinking moderately, or tobacco use moderately do not cause notable harm
      * Drinking to the point where the reason become impaired is not moral, but not seriously immoral
      * Drinking to perfect drunkeness (loss of reason or consciousness) is seriouslly immoral.
    - Marijuana is different case for two main reasons:
      * Today’s pot is not your grandpa’s swamp weed at 5% THC. Most varieties are 30%+ THC and bred to give a high very quickly.
      * There are serious effects far beyond the high, especially harm to brain development that can come to those under about 25.
      * It can truly be said that the dumb stoner sterotype has some medical science behind it. Weed can make you dumb.
      * As such, generally recreational marijuana use is immoral, and we priests in confession treat it as a mortal sin, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
    - Harder drugs are, of course, out.

**Summary**

* Note that at not point in time did we say, “The Catholic Church teaches this is wrong”, but have shown why nature demands these things.
* The Church teaches they are wrong as a warning to us. She does not cause their wrongness by her laws or teaching, she reflects them to help men be guided towards their proper end.
* Most other basic questions on morality can be seen in the same light
* Rare are the more complex questions that require the Church to weigh in with her teaching authority to solve controversial questions.