

Handout: Law and Virtue. Adult Catechesis, February 4, 2023, All Souls Anglican Church

Questions:

What is the Law?

What is the Law for?

How does the Law function in the life of a Christian?

How is the Law related to Jesus of Nazareth?

What is the purpose of summaries of the Law such as the Decalogue (Exodus 20) and the two commandments on which hang all the Law and the prophets (Matthew 22)?

How are the virtues enumerated in the NT related to the Law?

The “theological” virtues are variants of love to God and his kingdom

Faith (trust in God),

Hope (for God’s will to be done on earth as in heaven),

Love (eagerness to be close to God and to participate in God’s kingdom):

The virtues of neighbor-love (see Galatians 5 and Colossians 3) fulfill the commandment to love one’s neighbor

Joy: love to the neighbor in his good fortune

Compassion: love to the neighbor in trouble,

Generosity: love to the neighbor expressed in giving of self,

Forgiveness: love to the neighbor who has offended

Forbearance: love to the burdensome neighbor,

Loyalty (*pistis*): love to the neighbor to whom you have special ties of obligation

Thankfulness: love to the neighbor who has blessed you,

Humility: love to the neighbor that is pure of self-importance,

Self-control: love to the neighbor against your contrary impulses,

Patience: love to the neighbor for whom you must wait,

Truthfulness: love to the neighbor in what you say

Kindness: love to the neighbor in small gestures

Gentleness: love to the neighbor in anticipation of his vulnerability

Justice: love to the neighbor by giving her what is due her

Kinds of activity that constitute the super-activity of living a human life:

- **interactions with people** of different kinds: spouse, siblings, children, colleagues, clerks, hired hands, employers, and so forth
- **property transfers**: gifts (giving *and* receiving), sales, purchases, earning, spending
- **knowledge acquisition and transfer**: study, teaching, testimony (receiving *and* offering)
- **directing and following**: being a leader of followers; being a follower of a leader
- **worship**: reverencing, praising, giving thanks, honoring, obeying, adoring

Any of these activities can be practiced virtuously or unvirtuously, according to God’s Law or not according to it. The Christian virtues are ways of practicing these activities in a way that constitutes real **LIVING** for a human being and a keeping of the Law.