

Veritas Amoris Conference

June 25th –27th 2021

The Truth of Love: A Paradigm Shift for Moral Theology



Friday, 25 June 2021

12:05, Mass, Christ the King Chapel

(The Mass times listed in the program are the University's regularly scheduled times; priests with a letter of good standing are free to concelebrate.)

1:00–3:00, Pugliese Auditorium (open to the public)

(Join Zoom Meeting

<https://franciscan-edu.zoom.us/j/83281768453?pwd=YnRmWitObHdYdDFHQk9UTS9MMGt4QT09>)

Monsignor Livio Melina, “The Truth of Human Action: Practical Reason, Love, and Prudence”

Response: Michael Waldstein

Question and Answer

3:00–3:30, Break

3:30–5:00, Cosmas and Damian 200, Interventions and Discussion (reserved)

Stephan Kampowski, “With One’s Life on the Line: Christian Morality and Martyrdom”

Father Ignacio de Ribera, “Aristotle and the Conformation of the Soul by Sense-perception”

5:30, Dinner, Cosmas and Damian Atrium

7:00, Evening Prayer

Saturday, 26 June 2021

10:00, Mass, Christ the King Chapel

11:00–12:30, Pugliese Auditorium (open to the public)

(Join Zoom Meeting

<https://franciscan-edu.zoom.us/j/83281768453?pwd=YnRmWitObHdYdDFHQk9UTS9MMGt4QT09>)

Father José Granados, DCJM, “The Body of Christ: the Ultimate Foundation and Full Realization of the Unity of Truth and Love”

Response: Matthew Tsakanikas

Question and Answer

12:30–1:30, Lunch, Cosmas and Damian Atrium

1:30-3:00, Pugliese Auditorium (open to the public)

(Join Zoom Meeting

<https://franciscan-edu.zoom.us/j/83281768453?pwd=YnRmWitObHdYdDFHQk9UTS9MMGt4QT09>)

Father Luis Granados, DCJM, “The Truth of our Destiny: Fragility, Ideals, and Redemption”

Response: Michael Sirilla

Question and Answer

3:00-3:30, Break

3:30–4:30, Cosmas & Damian 200, Interventions and Discussion (reserved)

Conor Sweeney, “The Human Body: a Sacrament of Love”

Mo Woltering, “Exploring Subjectivity of the Family”

5:45, Dinner, Cosmas and Damian Atrium

7:00, Evening Prayer

Sunday, 27 June 2021

10:00, Mass, Christ the King Chapel

11:00–1:00, Cosmas and Damian 200 (reserved)

Presentation and Discussion of the Theses of the Veritas Amoris Project

1:00–2:00, Lunch, Cosmas and Damian Atrium



Articulating the Truth of Love: Twelve Theses of the Veritas Amoris Project

To articulate an adequate vision of the “truth of love,” the Veritas Amoris Project focuses on twelve theses.

1. To speak of the truth of love, one needs to establish the primacy of *God as Creator*.

“If you knew the gift of God ... (Jn 4:10): Faced with Samaritan woman’s thirst, which is a figure of human desire, Jesus recalls the primacy of God’s gift. Both truth and love refer to an origin that precedes us, whose ultimate source is found in God the Creator. To speak of God as Creator means to confess him as one who, in the freedom of his love, opens and sustains the space of the world, ordering it so that human beings can dwell in it and cultivate a fullness that goes beyond our human measure. To accept the Creator means, therefore, to accept the fact that in their unity truth and love are the key to understanding oneself, the world and history. Precisely this reference of love to transcendence also opens to reason a way that, starting from the experience of the truth of love, leads to the discovery of God the Creator.

2. *Christ the Redeemer* reveals the fullness of true love, stirring up within us a new question that he alone can answer.

“If you knew ... who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water” (Jn4:10). The Redeemer of human beings has revealed to us the Father’s love, rich in mercy, who generates us as his sons and daughters. He also provokes in us a question that enables us to receive this love. The Holy Spirit, the living water given by Jesus, converts our hearts so that Christ may be our life. In this way Christ becomes in us the source of a fraternity that brings a new meaning to history.

3. The perspective of the truth of love is the key to understanding who human beings are as the *image of God* in Christ.

“He told me everything I have ever done,” says the Samaritan woman after her encounter with him (Jn 4:39). Human beings are called to accept the original love offered by their Creator, a love which in turn demands the gift of themselves to God, and that manifests itself in their relationships with others. Only from this relational vision of the human being can we understand that freedom – so central a concern for the modern age – does not consist in an empty autonomy, but that it is a reality that springs from a gift and is called to fulfill itself in a gift: the gift of self.

4. Human beings discover and express the truth of love beginning from the language of their body.

The body tells us, in fact, that we come from others, testifying to an original gift (the “filial” body as a witness to the fact that we are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters). Moreover, in the body there are the anticipatory signs of the gift of self that is fully realized in spousal communion (the “spousal” body). In the body there is, finally, a dynamism of generation, which bids us go beyond ourselves (the “paternal” or “maternal” body).” Through his Incarnation, Christ lived the language of the body to the full, revealing its original foundation and anticipating its fullness. With the communication of his Spirit, he allows for this fullness in us to mature.

5. *Sexual difference* makes possible the union between man and woman and the transmission of life, and as such, it is the paradigmatic place in creation where love realizes its truth.

This truth gives rise to the family, founded on the indissoluble marriage between a man and a woman, which is open to welcoming and educating children. The family provides the background that allows human beings to understand in their own flesh and blood that their identity is in relationships: they have received their life as a son or daughter, to give themselves as a spouse and to transmit this life to others as a parent. Respecting this grammar of family relationships, one can find the proper declensions for the difference between generations. The denial of sexual difference and of its openness to the transmission of life encloses human beings in an individualism that makes it impossible to build up society.

6. The possibility of a truth of love seems to be contradicted by the *evil* present in the world, but it is this very fact that also speaks to us of how love is capable of redeeming human beings from sin and death.

To speak of the truth of love, it is necessary, in fact, to recognize the fragility of the human condition, and especially the presence of sin. Sin, as a rejection of the Creator’s original love, leads to the separation of love from truth. Truth will then be seen as something that imposes itself from the outside, while love, bereft of truth, will be an experience internal to the isolated individual. The truth of love in Christ overcomes sin, inasmuch as this truth manifests and communicates God’s mercy, which is not mere tolerance in the face of evil, but a regeneration of the moral subject so that he or she may live a love that is true and full.

7. The *sacraments* are the place that Christ left us to be able to live the truth of love.

In the sacraments, in fact, we enter the environment of relationships inaugurated by Christ, thus participating in the language of Christ’s body, in order to live as Christ lived and taught us to live. The sacraments contain the unity between a true word that opens a way for us, and a love that touches our flesh and transforms us. In this way, the sacraments are the events in which Christ acts with his Spirit of love, accompanying all of human history toward its maturation. In this way one overcomes the various reductive visions of the sacraments, which respectively see them as external rites without any link to the experience and the journey of human beings, as emotional comfort, or, finally, as mere signs of recognition of belonging to a community.

8. To see *human action* starting from the truth of love means to understand it as a response to an original call that invites us to reach the fullness of human life.

In this horizon, moral norms are requirements of the truth about good, and the virtues become the key to morality, inasmuch as they are dispositions which, starting from a gift of God, allow for excellent action. In this way, one overcomes a flawed approach to Christian morality that presents it as based on the polarity between the subjective and the objective, which then leads to the dialectic of conscience and law, which is incapable of grasping the dynamism of human action toward its fullness.

9. To speak of the truth of love in today's emotivist climate requires a reflection on the affections.

The truth of love implies a truth of the affections inasmuch as the affections are not self-referential sentiments. An affection is, instead, the first reaction to a love that precedes us and in that in itself already anticipates the union with the beloved, allowing us to move toward this goal. In its rationalist version the paradigm opposing the law to conscience ignores the affections or considers them as obstacles to freedom. The same paradigm also has an emotivist version, in which the affections are absolutized and thus lose their reference to truth. On the contrary, from the point of view of the truth of love, it is possible to recognize that in the affection there is an initial truth, which, however is not yet complete and sufficient. The importance of education thus becomes obvious as the field in which personal bonds allow for the affections to mature into virtues.

10. The perspective of the truth of love allows us to discover the height of the *human vocation* in Christ (cf. Vatican II, *Optatam Totius*, n. 16).

This vocation depends not only on the strengths of the isolated individual, but on the original call of love, which accompanies us, so that we may attain communion with God and neighbor. Christianity is at times accused of indicating to human beings an ideal that is too high for them reach. This accusation expresses the death of human desire, the despair of our calling, and the denial of the transformative power of grace, which aims at divinization. It implies a neo-Pelagianism of fragility that exclusively counts on the limited strength of the individual and which ultimately justifies his or her failures. However, the real possibilities of human beings to accomplish the good are not found in their own strength alone. On the contrary, since we are constituted in relation to God and others, these relationships allow us in our actions to go beyond the limited horizon of the isolated subject. For the Christian faith, our real possibilities are the possibilities opened by Christ, the Redeemer of human beings (cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n.103).

11. Considering the truth of love helps to propose an evangelizing *pastoral ministry* that aims at the formation of the Christian subject.

This type of pastoral care begins with conversion and aims at the realization of our vocation to holiness. Taking its bearings from Jesus' dialogue with the Samaritan woman, it is a pastoral ministry of the spring, and not of the well, inasmuch as it is based on the original gift of the vocation that God entrusts to human beings (spring), seeking to make them flourish, and not on the isolated forces of the individual, which soon run dry (well). In this way, one overcomes the

poverty of a pastoral approach that solicits emotions so as to console, but does not form people to act, or that gets fragmented in the attempt to solve problems, neglecting the greatness of the Christian vocation.

12. The perspective of the truth of love has great social potential. In fact, it enables us to understand how the good brings with it a dynamism of communion that goes beyond the individual person, which is why one must speak of the *common good*.

The good that attracts us is always also a common good as we share it with others to build society (cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 7). In this way the good of the person, as the good of communion, is possible only if it also promotes the good of other people with whom we live in relationship. The perspective of the common good thus makes it possible to establish an order of goods that is articulated according to the way in which each particular good is good precisely when it also builds the good of communion.