

Morality and Culture: Beyond Kant and Jansenius

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Love Alone is Credible

Hans Urs von Balthasar as Interpreter of the Catholic Tradition

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Morality, Cosmology and Culture: What is Moralism?

by

Tracey Rowland

Dean, John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family,

Melbourne, Australia

“Moralism”, has been described by David Schindler as the position whereby moral truth is either a matter of arbitrariness or (mechanical) imposition from without, or both.<sup>1</sup> Like many contemporary ideologies, it is the product of several centuries of improvident intellectual and spiritual movements. It was one of the many insights of von Balthasar that the problems which arose in the post-Conciliar era regarding the faithful’s perception and practice of the principles of the natural law, were not simply the result of a spreading infection of the liberal virus; but were moreover the logical outgrowth of a centuries long process characterised by the disintegration of the *perichoresis* of the transcendentals, culminating in either ‘moralism’ or ‘nihilism’—the complete separation of the objectively true and the beautiful from the good.

In von Balthasar’s genealogy particular emphasis is placed on the problems inherent within the neo-scholasticism of the counter-Reformation, typified by the separation between theoretical and affective theology: ‘while the theoretical theology of the baroque era proceeded from a fixed ‘teaching of the Church’ as object and therefore missed the spiritual, existential dimension which runs through everything biblical; the affective theology of the baroque missed the biblical center and proceeded ‘mystically’ instead of eschatologically’.<sup>2</sup> It was introverted instead of open to the world, anthropocentric instead of soteriological. Similarly, von Balthasar’s cousin, Peter Henrici SJ, has argued that a specifically modern Catholic theology existed

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<sup>1</sup> SCHINDLER, D, ‘Is Truth Ugly? Moralism and the Convertibility of Being and Love’, *Communio* 27 (Winter, 2000), p. 702.

<sup>2</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U, *Convergences to the Source of Christian Mystery*, (Ignatius: San Francisco, 1983), p. 34.

between Trent and Vatican II.<sup>3</sup> The practice of Christian life consisted largely of duties that were performed because one was obliged to do so. Moved by a kind of Christian Pharisaism, Christian existence had become viewed as a meritorious achievement that God commands and by virtue of which one is able to please him. In short, Kant had become a secret father of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, for von Balthasar, ‘all roads of modern thought intersect at this [Kantian] point’ where the ‘problem of the new man finds its solution in the biblical doctrine of faith as it can be developed by reason out of ourselves’.<sup>5</sup>

The Kantian emphasis upon duty and the notion of the moral as that which is done out of a sense of duty, rather than for the satisfaction of any affection, or even in accordance with any tradition, shares a logical affinity with the moral theology of Jansenism, which so infected the Church in France, Ireland and countries of the New World where Irish missionaries were strongly influential.<sup>6</sup> Although the two movements, fostered in the first instance by a Belgian Catholic bishop, and in the second instance two centuries later, by a German Lutheran philosopher, may belong to different intellectual genealogies, Henri Bergson’s concept of *récoupage* - a dialectical method of reducing two opposite doctrines to a single mistaken tenet –

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<sup>3</sup> HENRICI, P, ‘Modernity and Christianity’, *Communio* 17, (Summer, 1990), pp. 140-151.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>5</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U, *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1968)), p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Jansenism is notoriously difficult to define. The term was coined by Jesuits in the 1640’s to refer to those influenced by the ideas of Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres (1510-1576). William Doyle has suggested that ‘many difficulties are avoided if we look at Jansenism not as a body of doctrine but as a series of historical situations.’ See *Jansenism: Studies in European History*, (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 1999), p. 87. Cardinal Giovanni Bona (1609-74) suggested that a Jansenist is a Catholic who did not like Jesuits. Their general orientation was to resist practices which aroused the senses and to foster a lop-sided emphasis on the fallen condition of human nature. Although the movement had for a time Gallican rather than ultramontanist orientations, it took a more ultramontanist orientation when planted in Irish soil by French émigrés fleeing the Revolution and Irish priests trained in France who staffed Maynooth seminary at its foundation in 1795. In particular the Irish diaspora in the countries of the New World tended to define itself in opposition to a Protestant establishment rather than against the Roman curia; and thus loyalty to the Papacy was strengthened as a key characteristic distinguishing Catholics from Protestants.

would seem to be applicable in this context.<sup>7</sup> At its surface, Kantian ethics based on a severance of reason and revelation and hence grace and nature, appears to be the dialectical opposite of a Jansenist moral theology which holds out no hope at all for ethics and nature without the participation of grace. However the moral frameworks of both share the property of making duty and obedience to the will of a legislator (even if in Kant's case the legislator is reason itself) the driving force behind moral action. They also share the dialectical affinity of fostering, in the case of Kant, a humanism without religion, while in the case of Jansenius, a religion without humanism.<sup>8</sup>

An anthropology based on the total depravity of human nature coupled with a vision of morality reduced to questions of duty and law separated from desire, love, beauty and truth, is rather like a marriage where there is no delight in the gift of the other, but merely a sense of mutual obligation (which, of course, appeared as a model of marriage in many manuals of the pre-Conciliar era).<sup>9</sup> In such circumstances the glue holding together the practice of marital fidelity is the fear of the legislative authority defining the content and ambit of the duty. Conversely, an anthropology which is based on the belief that reason can craft its own moral framework without reference to grace or virtue, revelation or tradition provides little motivation at all for pursuing the good, aside from a kind of Hobbesian fear that unless one treats others as one desires to be treated, life in the state of nature will be nasty, brutish and short. Against the

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on this concept see: KOLAKOWSKI, L, *Bergson* (Oxford University Press, 1985); pp.6-7; and KOLAKOWSKI, L, *God Owes Us Nothing* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 115. In *Bergson*, Kolakowski writes: 'when trying to answer a question he [Bergson] confronted two existing solutions embedded in opposite conceptual schemes and then asked at what point they overlapped, that is, what they had in common, whereupon he showed that they shared a false assumption concealed in the very way they phrased the question'.

<sup>8</sup> For a treatment of this see MILBANK, J, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac's Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (Eerdmans, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> At its most extreme this included an understanding of sexual ethics based around the notion of 'marital dues'.

Kantian and Jansenist tendencies to emphasis duty and obedience, von Balthasar wishes to emphasise the *caritas forma virtutum* (love as the form of the virtues) and love as the form of revelation (*caritas forma revelationis*).<sup>10</sup>

In the context of his appraisal of the work of French writer Georges Bernanos (1888-1948), von Balthasar observed that for Bernanos nothing could be more devastating than a confusion, or even an approximation, of the phenomena of strong ecclesial obedience (typical of an ultramontanist Jansenism) and the narrowing of man's horizons by machines and social conditions (typical of the institutional practices within the culture of modernity). Bernanos wrote of a 'flight to conformism' – 'the blissful servitude that dispenses one from both willing and acting, that doles out a little task to each one and that, and in the near future, will have transformed man into the biggest and most ingenious of insects – a colossal ant'.<sup>11</sup> He believed that modern man adores systems because it dispenses him from the daily risk of judging. His choices are made by the system for him.

In a way that echoes Bernanos, in his collection of essays on *The End of Modern World*, Romano Guardini drew a connection between the character of 'mass man' and the problems of evangelisation in the contemporary world. He described 'mass man' as having no desire for independence or originality in either the management or the conduct of his life - neither liberty of external action nor freedom of internal

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<sup>10</sup> VON BALTHASAR, *Love Alone*, op. cit; , p. 49. For a description of love as the form of revelation see the Angelus Address of Benedict XVI on May 22, 2005 in which he states the following: Jesus revealed to us the mystery of God: He, the Son, made us know the Father who is in Heaven, and gave us the Holy Spirit, the Love of the Father and of the Son. Christian theology synthesizes the truth of God with this expression: only one substance in three persons. God is not solitude, but perfect communion. For this reason the human person, the image of God, realizes himself or herself in love, which is a sincere gift of self.

<sup>11</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U, *Bernanos: An Ecclesial Existence*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996), p.588.

judgement seem for him to have unique value; and this is understandably so, for he has never experienced them'.<sup>12</sup> He identified the problem as a causal relationship between the lack of a 'fruitful and lofty culture' that provides the sub-soil for a healthy nature, and a spiritual life that is 'numb and narrow' and develops along 'mawkish, perverted and unlawful lines'.<sup>13</sup>

Guardini's judgement is consistent with Angelo Scola's conclusion that since theology is born of Christian experience and must ceaselessly refer to the horizon that this experience sets for it, there are good grounds for saying that every crisis of theology – provided that the requirements of its object and the rigor of its method have been ensured – has its ultimate explanation in a crisis of Christian experience.'<sup>14</sup> It is also consistent with the conclusion of Peter Casarella that without a proper understanding of the sensuous nature of our perception of the divine, western theology threatens to lose grasp of its basic sacramental and liturgical origins.<sup>15</sup>

There are, in other words, what Kenneth L Schmitz has described as 'sapiential experiences', that is, experiences which mediate to the person an insight or vision of the glory of God and the beauty or splendour of creation. In the absence of such experiences the person lacks an understanding of the form or forms of goodness and is left with, at best, a coherent framework of laws whose credibility is based on its logical consistency for those who have the patience and inclination to study them; or more commonly, a collection of principles mutually inconsistent, tacitly cobbled

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<sup>12</sup> GUARDINI, R, *The End of the Modern World*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1957), p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88-89.

<sup>14</sup> SCOLA, A, "Christian Experience and Theology", *Communio*, (Summer, 1996), p. 204.

<sup>15</sup> CASARELLA, P, 'Experience as a theological category: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Christian Encounter with God's Image', *Communio*, 20 (Spring, 1993): 118-128.

together from rival moral traditions, whose credibility is based on their common acceptability within the dominant institutions of any given culture.<sup>16</sup>

Not only can a sense of the form of goodness be lost, but also, as von Balthasar emphasised, the form of beauty. The Kantian-Jansenist tendency in ethics to reduce morality to legal maxims and the performance of particular actions without reference to the motivations underlying them, leads to a general or at least partial eclipse of the splendor of the form. The Kantian-Jansenist mentality in this context is frequently found in liturgical discussions when it is suggested that the form of the Mass does not matter, that the only thing that matters is the validity of the Eucharistic consecration. Hence, in a similar manner, Paul VI defended the Mass of 1968 on the grounds that notwithstanding it required ‘parting with the speech of Christian centuries’ and ‘becoming like profane intruders in the literary precincts of Sacred utterance’ it was necessary because the participation of the people was worth more than the beauty of the ‘language of the angels’ and modern people are ‘fond of plain language which is easily understood and converted into everyday speech’.<sup>17</sup>

What Bernanos identified as a conformist tendency in modern man, and what Guardini identified as modern man’s lack of experience of genuine freedom of internal judgement and liberty of external action can also be related to what the English Catholic historian Christopher Dawson identified as the ‘bourgeois’, rather than ‘erotic’, character of the culture of modernity. The bourgeois temperament is

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<sup>16</sup> For the classic exposition of the way in which fragments of rival moral traditions are cobbled together into incoherent institutional practices see MACINTYRE, A, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, (London: Duckworth, 1990); ‘Practical Rationalities as Forms of Social Structure’, *Irish Philosophical Journal* IV, 1-2, 1987, 3-19; and ‘Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy: Rules, Virtues and Goods’, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXVI, 1, 1992, 3-19.

<sup>17</sup> Paul VI, General Audience Address, November 26, 1969.

calculating, pragmatic, focused on efficiency and predictable outcomes. It discourages moral heroism as unreasonable and gives priority to the goods of efficacy over the goods of excellence. The analogue in Bernanos is between the dispositions of the imbecile and the *honnête homme*, between a technocratic servility and an ‘aristocracy of the spirit’. For Bernanos moralism is, at least in part, a stance fearful of making an act of judgement. It is the opposite of an aristocratic disposition for which judgement is a seignorial act. In his work, *We, the French*, Bernanos wrote:

The more a sense of Christian honour becomes debilitated, the greater the abundance, indeed superabundance, of casuists. At the very least, the man of honor offers you the following advantage: he spares the casuist all his labor...The moment a person feels the need to consult the casuists in order to know the amount starting from which stealing money may be considered a mortal sin...we may say that his social value is nil, even if he abstains from stealing.<sup>18</sup>

Commenting on this passage, von Balthasar wrote that ‘the person who does not come to terms with his drives and whose religion risks becoming an endless struggle between duty and inclination – the threat of a Kantian Jansenism – is precisely the person who will most readily accept casuistry’, and further, against such a ‘bourgeois morality and a despairing moralism, Bernanos proposed the ethos of chivalry, which for him was intimately related to the ethos of the saint’.<sup>19</sup> The chivalrous person and the saint both go beyond what is by duty required. Christ’s act of self-sacrifice on calvary was in part an act of obedience to the Father, but it makes no sense aside a framework of Divine love. As Thérèse of Lisieux wrote:

Love is the central organ of the mystical body, the heart...[it] alone is capable of setting the other members in motion and if love were ever to die

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<sup>18</sup> BERNANOS, G, *We, the French*, cited by von Balthasar in *Bernanos: An Ecclesial Existence*, pp. 298-9.

<sup>19</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U, *Bernanos: An Ecclesial Existence*, op.cit; p. 298.

out, then the Apostles would cease to proclaim the Gospel and the martyrs refuse to shed their blood.<sup>20</sup>

From another angle von Balthasar was highly critical of any rationalistic reduction of the logic of the Cross:

For if the Cross is turned into a law which reason can grasp and administer, even an elastic sort of law governing the rhythm of life, then it is once again a *law* – in the Pauline sense – and absolute love is displaced and set aside by knowledge: this means to say that God’s sovereign freedom (which could be quite other than what it is) is judged before the court of human reason – and condemned as that which it really is.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, far from cultures, social practices and traditions being irrelevant to our understanding of human moral behaviour, which is another tenet at least implicitly shared by Kant and Jansenius, it may be argued that a person’s ability to perceive the principles of morality and thereby participate in the transcendental of goodness, is related to the way in which elements of a culture act as a barrier to the soul’s reception of the theological virtues, that is, to the work of faith upon the intellect, love upon the will and hope upon the memory. While von Balthasar did not attempt to baptise any *particular culture* and in fact argued that ‘Christ wasted hardly a word concerning the State or culture, and not a word at all concerning art and science...in order not to rob man, the labouring king of creation, of the earnestness of his accomplishments by applying some magical formula’, there are nonetheless general principles one can apply to test whether a particular culture is either open or hostile to what von Balthasar called the form of love.<sup>22</sup> These principles may include a

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted by von Balthasar in *Thérèse of Lisieux: The Story of a Mission* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954), p. 141.

<sup>21</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U; *Love Alone*, op.cit; p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U, *Bernanos: an Ecclesial Existence*, op.cit; p.33. The interest in the relationship between chivalry and sanctity may have been fostered by the marriage of Bernanos to Jeanne Talbert d’Arc, a descendent of the brother of St. Joan of Arc.

reference to what von Balthasar described as the ‘archetypes’ provided by Revelation which stand above the level of worldly questions and like stars shed their light upon them’.<sup>23</sup> The English Balthasarian scholar, Aidan Nichols OP, has also expressed such a test in the language of Trinitarian appropriations:

First, a culture should be conscious of transcendence as its true origin and goal, and this we call culture’s tacit ‘paterological’ dimension, its implicit reference to the Father. Second, the forms which a culture employs should manifest integrity – wholeness and interconnectedness; clarity – transparency to meaning; and harmony – a due proportion in the ways that its constituent elements relate to the culture as a whole. And since these qualities – integrity, clarity and harmony – are appropriated in classical theology to the divine Son, the ‘Art’ of God and splendor of the Father, we can call such qualities of the beautiful form the specifically Christological aspects of culture...And thirdly, then, in the Trinitarian taxis, the spiritually vital and health-giving character of the moral ethos of our culture yields up culture’s pneumatological dimension, its relation to the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup>

From such an appropriation it follows that certain types of cultures will be an impediment to the perception of the splendour of the truth, and in particular that the cultures of modernity and post-modernity are weak in relation to all three aspects, but especially weak in relation to the Christological. Here the critiques of the rôle of bureaucratic practices such as one finds in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre are particularly helpful in explaining this weakness, as well as explaining the tendency towards conformism and the resulting banality identified by Bernanos and Guardini. The lack of integrity and harmony within the institutional practices of contemporary western culture and between institutions within the same culture, place the human person in a position where one’s social livelihood frequently demands a servile conformity to norms which impede the development of virtue.

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid*; p. 33

<sup>24</sup> NICHOLS, A, *Christendom Awake: On Re-Energising the Church in Culture* (London: Gracewing, 1999), p. 17.

The Paterological aspects of Western culture, the implicit reference to the Father, are also extremely weak. In fact, in an historical sense, it might be argued that the Paterological dimension was the first to be subverted. Benedict XVI while still a Cardinal observed that the ‘obscuring of faith in creation is a fundamental part of what constitutes modernity’, and consequently of specifically modern accounts of morality. In his account of this eclipse, there are three inter-related movements. First, in the thought of Giordano Bruno, the world itself is presented as divine, as self-grounding; second, in the thought of Galileo, knowledge of God is turned into the knowledge of the mathematical structures of nature, and as consequence the concept of nature takes the place of the concept of creation; and thirdly, whereas the first and second movements are in different ways an attempt to move backwards to a time before the Incarnation, the third movement, associated with Martin Luther, is a radical attempt to rid Christianity of all Greek components, above all, the concept of the cosmos in the question of being, and therefore in the area of the doctrine of creation. With Luther there is a radical disjunction of the realms of grace and creation; and, as Benedict concludes, ‘without the mystery of redemptive love, nature is reduced to geometry and history to the drama of evil’.<sup>25</sup>

Accordingly, Schindler argues that ‘the point of all creation, including creation as extended by means of embodied human freedom into culture, takes its proper form in terms of a(n) (analogically conceived) nuptial body, which receives its ultimate meaning in terms of the incarnate Word, the first-born of creatures (Col. 1:15-18).’<sup>26</sup> As a consequence, the overcoming of moralism presupposes a distinctive ontology which in turn carries a distinctive view not only of man but of precisely everything: of

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<sup>25</sup> RATZINGER, J, *In the Beginning...A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 89

<sup>26</sup> SCHINDLER, D, ‘Is Truth Ugly? Moralism and the Convertibility of Being and Love’, *op.cit.*: p. 704

every aspect of every entity and artefact in cosmos and culture.<sup>27</sup> Consistent with this understanding is Cardinal Marc Ouellet's judgement that since God's desire is for the integration of all of creation into the beatitude of his Trinitarian exchange, 'the Trinitarian horizon of human existence is the foundation of ethical decisions'.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, 'the power of the Trinitarian horizon consists in indissolubly uniting the two dimensions, historical and eschatological, of ethics'.<sup>29</sup> Hence 'von Balthasar did not propose a theological ethics detached from history, nor a natural ethics extrinsic to grace'.<sup>30</sup>

While von Balthasar has focused on the disintegration of the *perichoresis* of the transcendentals, Ratzinger on the obscuring of faith in creation, Bernanos and Guardini on the morally impoverished horizons of Mass Man, and Christopher Dawson on the non-erotic character of bourgeois-Protestant culture; Michael Hanby's genealogy goes back even further to an account of volition which the Pelagians imported from Stoicism. Consistent with Ouellet and Schindler, Hanby argues that 'at issue within the culture of modernity is the Trinity itself and specifically whether the meaning of human nature and human agency are understood to occur within Christ's mediation of the love and delight shared as *donum* between the Father and the Son, or beyond it'.<sup>31</sup> He observes that Pelagianism instituted a rupture in the Christological and Trinitarian economy, creating possibilities for human nature 'outside' the Trinity and the mediation of Christ. For this reason he defines the Pelagian tendency as 'philosophising without a mediator' and an attempt to smuggle Stoic cosmology into

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, 704

<sup>28</sup> OUELLET, M, 'The Foundations of Christian Ethics according to von Balthasar', *Communio* 17 (Fall, 1990), p. 395.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 395.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 395.

<sup>31</sup> HANBY, M, *Augustine and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 73.

Christian thought.<sup>32</sup> From this perspective Kantianism may be viewed as a special kind of Pelagianism.

Contrasting a Trinitarian with a Pelagian-Kantian account of the will, Hanby states:

In the one, *voluntas* is the site of our erotic participation in an anterior gift, and it is at once self-moved and moved by the beauty of that gift. Here will, whether human or divine, is constituted in a relation of love for the beloved and its freedom is established as dispossession. In the other, will names an inviolable power, and freedom consists in demonstrating this inviolability, through the double negation both of itself and of created beauty.<sup>33</sup>

Since, as Hanby stresses, it is Christ who determines what it means to be human and Christ working inseparably with the other Trinitarian *personae* who incorporates us fully and finally into our being, it follows that readings of human nature and human agency which are offered without reference to Christ's mediation, are destined to end in some form of moralism or nihilism. In his *Nine Propositions for a Christian Ethic* von Balthasar concluded:

[W]here Christ's divinity is not recognised, he necessarily appears as a human exemplar, and Christian ethics becomes either heteronomous, where Christ becomes simply an obligatory norm for my conduct, or autonomous, to the extent that his actions are interpreted merely as the achieved self-perfection of the human ethical subject.<sup>34</sup>

Corresponding to the different accounts of the operation of the will as a site of an erotic participation in an anterior gift, or as a power to be exercised on the world, are

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.106.

<sup>33</sup> ibid, p.135.

<sup>34</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U, et.al; *Principles of a Christian Morality* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), p. 80.

different accounts of rationality. These are described as the difference between a credal logic and a secular or mechanical logic; while cultures built upon these different notions of rationality are described as being driven either by a Trinitarian logos or a mechanical logos. For example, John Paul II juxtaposed the utilitarian rationality of the culture of death with the Trinitarian wisdom of the civilisation of love, David Schindler, following Bernanos, contrasts the disintegrating form of the machine with the integrating form of love, and Catherine Pickstock speaks of the different desires of the city of death and the liturgical city. All of these juxtapositions may be viewed as confirmations of von Balthasar's reflection on the *Book of the Apocalypse* that life in the world is both a liturgy and a battlefield. In both duty is only part of the practice. Doxology is not mere duty parade but an act of love, while the ethics of the battlefield goes beyond following orders to heroic, self sacrificial decisions for the good of others made under fire, hence, chivalry.

Thus, the overcoming of moralism, whose genealogy can on some accounts be traced as far back as Pelagius, and on others to the combined effects of sixteenth century scholasticism, Lutheranism, Kantianism, Jansenism, and the eclipse of the doctrine of creation in Renaissance thought, requires at least the following:

1. The development of a theology of culture incorporating an account of the rôle of experience on moral formation and a notion of creation as a gift with a trinitarian form;
2. An evaluation of cultures from the perspective of their Paterological, Christological and Pneumatological aspects; as part of a wider re-evaluation of

- the idea of the autonomy of the cultural order found in passages of *Gaudium et spes*;
3. A rejection of Kantian and Pelagian accounts of human will and human freedom;
  4. The development of a Trinitarian theological anthropology which emphasises the relationships between faculties of the soul (intellect, memory and will), theological virtues (faith, hope and love) and the transcendentals (truth, beauty and goodness);
  5. In relation to 4, a particular study of the way in which the relationship between memory, hope and beauty is being severed by practices in contemporary architecture, music and family life;
  6. A retrieval of a specifically Christian understanding of honour, chivalry, and an aristocracy of the spirit as important elements of the moral life;
  7. A renewed emphasis upon what von Balthasar called *caritas forma virtutum* (love as the form of the virtues) and *caritas forma revelationis* (love as the form of revelation), in order to steer Christians away from the Jansenist danger of thinking about ethics as the performance of duties to please and appease God; and
  8. The restoration of the links between dogma and doxology.
  9. An understanding of grace that is related to the gratuitous raising of the human person to God, that is, related to the Patristic notion of deification, rather than being merely a juridical corrective for sin; that is, an understanding of grace that is more Patristic than Baroque.

Speaking of the relation between cultural experience and the work of evangelisation, in his 2004 address to the Knights of Columbus, Cardinal Stafford commented that

‘every world religion is trembling before the advances of American pop culture’ and ‘nothing is more needful than a rediscovery of Catholic identity which is doxological, sacramental, incarnational, Trinitarian, relational, analogical and liturgical’ – a list which he said could be summarised by saying that ‘the Catholic experience of faith in time is nuptial.’<sup>35</sup> It is such a methodological approach which, in Balthasar’s words, ‘is the central theological *kairos* of our time’.<sup>36</sup> A Catholic account of morality needs to be repositioned on the form of love, the practice of chivalry and a “crusade” against those aspects of contemporary culture, variously described as ‘mass culture’, ‘pop culture’ and ‘bourgeois culture’ which demean the human person by lowering his cultural horizons, circumscribing his exercise of free will, treating him as a cog in an economic and bureaucratic machine, and in general fostering *acedia* by undermining the human capacity for greatness, that is, for the deification open to a child of God.

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<sup>35</sup> STAFFORD, J, ‘Knights of Columbus-States Dinner Keynote Address’, Washington DC, August 3, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> VON BALTHASAR, H, U, *Love Alone*, op.cit, p.10