



A Pedagogy for Integrating Catholic Social Ethics into the Business Ethics Course

John C. Cassidy

Saint Mary's College of California

Abstract. Catholic business schools may better fulfill their religious mission by integrating Catholic social ethics into the business curriculum. But doing so presents a challenge to many business instructors who are unfamiliar with the Catholic ethical tradition. The purpose of this paper is to help overcome this difficulty by describing a pedagogy the author has used successfully to integrate Catholic social ethics into the business ethics course. The pedagogy utilizes the Model of Integrated Course Design, the Method of Shared Inquiry, and a model of moral behavior grounded in the student's worldview. This framework makes plausible a learning goal of increasing not only students' moral awareness and moral reasoning, but their moral motivation as well—a goal particularly appropriate to a Catholic management education. Attitudes of students toward the course are examined and implications drawn for implementing it in the curriculum.

Keywords: Catholic social ethics, Catholic management education, integrated course design, shared inquiry, teaching business ethics.

1. Introduction

Writing on Catholic management education, Naughton and Bausch (1996) raise a salient issue for Catholic business schools: should their graduates examine business decisions any differently than managers educated at non-Catholic institutions?¹ Saint Mary's College of California has responded to that question affirmatively by introducing a new undergraduate business course, *Business Ethics and Catholic Social Ethics*. *BECSE* is a one semester, upper division, elective course offered to business majors as an alternative to our standard philosophical or "secular" business ethics course, from which it differs in three important respects.

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1. Although some may consider the notion of a Catholic management education a bit parochial, it is the concern of a significant segment of higher education in business in the United States. Naughton and Bausch (1996) estimate there are 235 Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S. alone, with almost two-thirds of a million students. Of these schools, 163 have undergraduate business programs and 93 have MBA programs, two of which rank among the top ten largest part-time MBA programs. Altogether these programs include an estimated 131,000 business majors.

1. *BECSE* integrates Catholic social ethics into the intellectual framework of business ethics. Catholic social ethics (CSE) is a tradition of moral teachings on social, economic, political, and cultural matters set forth in numerous papal and conciliar documents of the Roman Catholic Church². It represents a sustained attempt by the Church to understand how urban-industrial societies function and what moral principles should guide them. Thus, as a constituent institution of modern capitalism, business falls within the moral critique of Catholic social ethics.³
2. *BECSE* is designed especially, although not exclusively, for “intrinsically” religious students (Allport & Ross, 1967).⁴ These are people who take their religious faith seriously as a moral guide in their daily lives, and who are “likely to have more integrative, ethical perspectives on ‘all of life’” (Donahue, 1985). The course thereby gives students the option of relating business ethics to their own worldview.
3. The pedagogy of *BECSE* embodies important insights on learning and effective course design provided by the Method of Shared Inquiry and the Model of Integrated Course Design.

This paper describes the pedagogy used by the author to successfully integrate Catholic social ethics into *BECSE*. We first argue that, in a Catholic management education, business ethics should be informed by not only philosophical ethics, but Catholic social ethics, as well. Then we describe the pedagogy of *BECSE*—its learning goal, teaching strategy, and underlying model of moral behavior. Finally, the surveyed attitudes of students toward *BECSE* are

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2. See, for example, Dorr (1992) for a historical account and analysis of modern CSE. Mich (1990) offers an introduction to CSE covering its key documents and the grass-roots social movements the tradition has inspired.
 3. Catholicism is one of several religions reflecting on the moral conduct of business. Among the Western traditions, Protestant and Roman Catholic Christianity and Judaism have long concerned themselves with the behavior and presuppositions of business and economic systems. Helpful overviews of Christian social ethics are found in Crook (1999), Atherton (1994), and Camenisch and McCann (1990). The diversity of Judeo-Christian perspectives on business is the subject of the *Business Ethics Quarterly: Special Issue on Western Religious Approaches to Business Ethics* (1997). Interestingly, Rae and Wong (2004) have introduced a business ethics textbook that treats the subject from a Judeo-Christian viewpoint.
 4. Barrera (2000) argues that, although the principles of CSE come from a particular religious tradition, they “are accessible to a pluralistic, even secular audience.” The universality of these norms derives from their origins in natural law, a moral outlook with the basic premise that human moral beliefs are grounded in principles of right conduct that are universal, since they are discoverable through human reason. From this perspective, the precepts of CSE can address the larger community “because their substance and warrants can stand on philosophical premises alone without recourse to confessional beliefs.”

examined, revealing some important issues for implementing the course successfully.

2. Why Integrate Catholic Social Ethics into Business Ethics?

The School of Economics and Business Administration offers *BECSE* as a substantive expression of fidelity to the Catholic mission of Saint Mary's College. The School's own mission statement includes a commitment to

engage our students and faculty in issues which reflect our Catholic heritage, such as individual, organizational, and societal ethics, and a concern for human welfare and social justice.

We interpret this to mean that in a mission-driven, Catholic management education, the business ethics course should give appropriate weight to social justice and social ethics; certainly more than is conceded them in conventional business ethics courses, which tend to focus on individual and organizational morality.^{5, 6}

BECSE also reflects the strong interest of Saint Mary's College and other Catholic colleges and universities in preserving and enhancing their Catholic identity (Naughton, Bausch, and Pierucci, 1996). In particular, the papal document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (John Paul II, 1990) explicitly calls for strengthening the Catholic character of Catholic higher education:

Education of students is to combine academic and professional development with formation in moral and religious principles and the social teachings of the Church; the program of studies for each of the various professions is to include an appropriate ethical formation in that profession.

Thus, the Church itself insists that Catholic institutions make its social teachings part of an "appropriate ethical formation", that is, one that supports their Catholic identity and, in our particular case, the integrity of a Catholic management education.

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5. Business ethics may be categorized by the scope of interaction among people. Interpersonal or managerial ethics concerns the rules for moral conduct of individuals. Organizational ethics considers the rules for moral conduct of larger groups of people within society, such as corporations. Social ethics deals with the rules for a moral society, critiquing its purpose and the relationships among its institutions. Some of the most difficult issues of business ethics occur at intersections of these ethical domains.
 6. In his critique of the conventional model, Shaw (1996) notes that "business ethics textbooks typically focus on individual decision making...ignoring the socioeconomic context and institutional forces that shape ethical decisions." In reality, "business ethics is both applied ethics and applied political philosophy (and) cannot avoid the fact that moral issues and public policy issues frequently intertwine."

More generally, the latest accreditation standards of the AACSB place increased emphasis on congruence of the Business curriculum with the school's mission statement. As a result, Catholic business schools seeking to gain or maintain AACSB accreditation are considering appropriate means to integrate Catholic values and viewpoints into their business programs. One substantive way to do this is to enrich philosophical business ethics with the perspectives of Catholic social ethics.

The most compelling reason for integration is the benefit to business students themselves. As Epstein (2002) explains, CSE broadens their interpretive horizon for thinking about business ethics:

The pertinence of Catholic social teachings to our understanding of the moral dimensions of our contemporary global political economy is patent. CST provides a searching lens through which to examine the ethical nature of that economy and of our business organizations and those who manage them. Papal encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum: The Condition of Labor*, *Mater et Magistra: Christianity and Social Progress*, *Laborem Exercens: On Human Work*, and *Centesimus Annus: On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, focusing as they do on the nature of work, the dignity of labor and the human experience in industrial society contain insights basic to courses in macroeconomics, organizational behavior, and human resources management.

Integration also makes plausible a more significant learning outcome for students taking *BECSE*—motivation to *do* right, not just discern right. We now examine this opportunity in greater detail.

3. Pedagogy of *BECSE*

Two basic tasks were involved in developing *BECSE*. One was integration of content, which confirmed the relevance of CSE to the full range of topics covered in the conventional business ethics course and also suggested that, in light of *BECSE*'s amplified learning goal, increased emphasis was due certain of these topics. The other task was integration of design, that is, modifying the pedagogy of the conventional course to help achieve that learning goal.

3.1. Integration of Content

Catholic social ethics has been successfully integrated with philosophical ethics throughout *BECSE* and proven itself an overarching framework germane to the traditional content of a business ethics course. Figure 1 identifies several first principles of Catholic social ethics, each of which is an important link to a Christian understanding of the purpose and moral obligations of business. Figure

2 associates those norms with business issues found relevant to them in our classroom discussions.

Figure 1: Some First Principles of Catholic Social Ethics

<p><i>Economic Justice:</i> The economy is for people and not the reverse.</p> <p><i>Human Dignity:</i> The measure of every social institution is whether it threatens or enhances human dignity.</p> <p><i>Rights and Duties:</i> Human dignity is achieved only if human rights are protected and duties met.</p> <p><i>Participation:</i> The person is by nature social and thus has a right and a duty to participate in society.</p> <p><i>The Common Good:</i> Comprises all the elements of social living—economic, political, cultural—that enable individuals to fulfill themselves.</p> <p><i>Solidarity:</i> A commitment to the common good.</p> <p><i>Option for the Poor:</i> A basic moral test is how society’s poor are faring. Give priority to the needs of the poor.</p> <p><i>Subsidiarity:</i> Responsibilities should be attended to as close as possible to the level of individual initiative.</p> <p><i>Priority of Labor Over Capital:</i> Capital is meant to serve labor and does so when the production process respects workers as ends, not merely as means.</p>
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Figure 2: Catholic Social Ethics and Current Business Issues

CSE Principle	Relevant Business Issues
Economic Justice	Executive compensation, MNE-host country relationships
Human Dignity	Sweatshops, just wage, quality of work life
Rights and Duties	Workplace safety, plant closings, product safety, right to unionize, just wage, equal opportunity, sexual harassment, consumerism, whistleblowing
The Common Good	Stakeholder management, environmentalism, property rights, product liability, pollution, antitrust, corporate social responsibility
Participation	Employment/ownership, corporate governance, discrimination, public policy process, affirmative action
Option for the Poor	Redlining, pharmaceutical pricing, LDC debt
Solidarity	Right to organize unions, environmental issues
Subsidiarity	Regulation, comparative economic systems
Priority of Labor	Mergers & acquisitions, plant closing, quality of worklife

Because *BECSE*'s learning goal is to promote enduring motivation for moral behavior, its pedagogy gives increased emphasis to certain topics and teaching devices that can help shape such motivation. In particular, virtue ethics, which the author regards as the essential ethical system espoused by Catholic social thought, gains increased prominence in *BECSE* in relation to utilitarianism, Kantianism, and Rawlsian justice, the dominant ethical systems in the conventional course. Moreover, since virtue ethics—virtue being “the character of paradigmatic individuals” (Alderman, 1982)—seeks to describe persons whose character traits we might want to emulate, the selection of course cases and readings for *BECSE* includes a larger number of moral models for students to reflect upon, such as Aaron Feuerstein of Mauldin Mills, William Hewlett of Hewlett-Packard, Roy Vagelos of Merck, and Cesar Chavez.⁷

3.2. Integration of Design

Whitmore (2000) has considered if and how the content of a course on Catholic social ethics should shape the teaching method. He concludes that both the content and the practical, as opposed to theoretical or deductive, mode of moral reasoning characterizing CSE support a more egalitarian or dialectical teaching approach than the commonly used hierarchical format of lectures and exams. His CSE-informed pedagogy emphasizes seminar-style discourse to promote participation by every student in discussions of texts from the Catholic social tradition, minimum intervention by the instructor in these conversations, and *praxis* or experiential learning.

The pedagogy of *BECSE* shares these features but is designed specifically to encourage and enable interested business faculty who are *not* scholars of Catholic social ethics to incorporate the subject into their business ethics courses. In this pedagogy, both the Model of Integrated Course Design and the Method of Shared Inquiry play essential roles.

Fink (2002) has noted that the majority of college courses do not seem to have learning goals that go much beyond an understand-and-remember type of learning. Teachers of business ethics seeking a more significant learning outcome might begin by asking what impact the course ought to have on students.

Certainly it should, and can, sharpen their moral awareness as well as the capacity for moral judgment. However, there is little reason to believe that a conventional business ethics course, limited to the abstract, impersonal moral

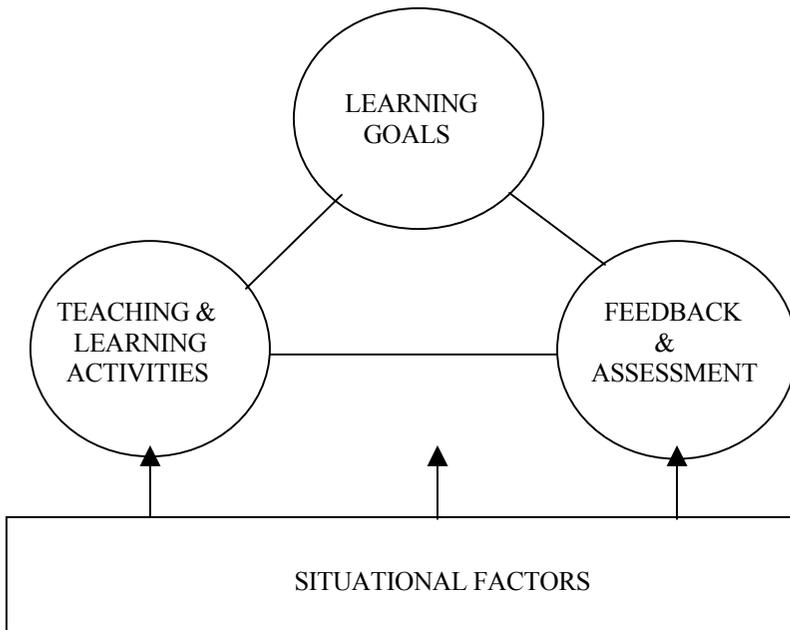
7. Williams (1986) argues for applying the insights of narrative theology (presenting the Judeo-Christian faith through Biblical stories) to philosophical business ethics, and suggests that... *any account of morality is incomplete without a vision of what constitutes a good life—of the kind of persons we want to be .. The business ethics of philosophers needs to spell out this way of life (with) the life stories of some of the leading persons in business who are known for their moral sensitivity. The stories of businesses that are recognized for ethical awareness need to be written and read by students and managers.*

logic of secular ethics and a lecture format, could have a significant and lasting impact on the moral behavior of its graduates in the world of business. As McCann (1997) observes:

Standard textbooks in business ethics treat the subject as if students' notions of morality are devoid of religious influence. This approach eschews the sources of conscience in religious experience in favor of the abstract logic of philosophical ethics. As a result, students learn theories of business ethics as one more set of abstractions, to be set aside once the course is over. They should, instead, have the opportunity to approach business ethics in a context that, for them, is more natural, meaningful, and motivating—their own religious experience.

As a result, the standard business ethics course, though capable of instilling a cognitive understanding of ethics, is not likely to inspire an emotional one, capable of creating motivation to *do* the right thing, not just clarify the right thing to do.⁸

Figure 3: The Model of Integrated Course Design



BECSE seeks to create opportunities for more affective learning outcomes through more effective course design. The model of integrated course design (Fink, 2002) is a new means for teachers to achieve superior learning outcomes;

8. Recent research suggests that when people make moral decisions, emotional responses can play as much of a role as logical analyses, bringing emotion firmly into the process of moral reasoning itself (Greene, 2001).

in our case, moral motivation. It proposes that if faculty can learn how to design courses more effectively, students are much more likely to have significant learning outcomes; that is, by the end of the course they will have changed in some important and lasting way.

The primary components of the model and their relationships are shown in Figure 3. Course design will be effective if it includes all of the following: (1) a thorough analysis of situational factors, (2) significant learning goals, (3) educative feedback and assessment, and (4) active learning and teaching. All of these components need to be integrated; that is, each must reflect and support the others.

3.3. Situational Factors

Situational factors can strongly influence teaching strategies. For *BECSE*, these included, *inter alia*, whether the course should be lower or upper division, the optimum class size, students' reasons for enrolling, their familiarity with CSE, and the teacher's familiarity with CSE and the method shared inquiry. To illustrate, philosophical ethics and CSE are interleaved throughout the course. While the former is taught using lecture and the case method, the latter uses shared inquiry in a seminar format, which limits the optimum class size to 19-21 students.

Perhaps the most important situational factor for faculty interested in Catholicizing their business ethics courses is that relatively few of them are familiar with Catholic social ethics, its history, and its literature.⁹ This can be a serious obstacle, since prior knowledge of CSE will largely determine the perceived level of risk a teacher is willing to take by introducing the course. However, the risk can be mitigated substantially by using the method of shared inquiry for class discussions of CSE.

Shared inquiry is the distinctive learning approach used in the Great Books Program (Great Books Foundation, 1987), which at Saint Mary's College of California is a required component of all undergraduate curricula. The method enables faculty to lead seminars on readings that span a broad range of academic fields outside their own specialties. Figure 4, for example, shows the diverse disciplines represented in a Great Books seminar recently lead by the author.

In shared inquiry, the instructor does not explain the subject to students or follow a textbook. Instead, only the foundational or "core" texts of a field are

9. A survey of Catholic colleges and universities (Naughton, Bausch, and Pierucci, 1996) found that "while many respondents believed that students should engage the Catholic social tradition with social issues, only a minority felt they were familiar enough with the tradition to actually do it." Moreover, Whitmore (2002) reports that "Of the schools that sought to infuse Catholic teaching throughout the curriculum...without prior efforts at educating faculty about what Catholic social teaching is and is not and the various methods through which it can be taught in a self-critical rather than a triumphalistic way, there is great resistance among many faculty to the idea of introducing anything specifically Catholic into the core required curriculum."

read, such as Marx's *Wage Labor and Capital* or Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The instructor and students discuss the readings *together* in reflective conversations, not lectures; asking interpretative and evaluative questions, not seeking authoritative answers; and learning from each other, rather than from a "teacher".

Figure 4: Disciplines Represented in the Great Books Program at Saint Mary's College: 19th and 20th Century Thought

Discipline	Author Read
Political Economics	Marx
Sociology	Weber
Drama	Ibsen
Psychology	Freud
Ethics	M. L. King, Jr.
Philosophy	Nietzsche
Evolutionary Biology	Darwin
Artificial Intelligence	Turing
Modern Literature	Morrison, Garcia-Marquez

In *BECSE*, students use shared inquiry to discuss a half dozen or so core texts spanning the modern era of CSE, from the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, written in 1894, to the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All*, which appeared in 1986. (All encyclicals and pastoral documents named herein are found in O'Brien & Shannon, 1996.) Each student reads the assigned text and contributes in class an interpretive or an evaluative question. A good interpretive question asks, "What does he mean by this?" It has more than one answer the text can support, and in discovering them, students get a better sense of what the author might mean. Here, for example, is one student's interpretive question:

In *Laborum Exercens*, section 3, Pope John Paul II says, "Human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question...and if the solution must be sought in the direction of making life more human, then the key, namely human work, acquires fundamental and decisive importance." John Paul refers to the "social question" several times in the encyclical, yet he never actually defines the term. What does he mean by it?"

An evaluative question asks, "Do I agree with what the author says?"¹⁰ The evaluative question of another student illustrates:

10. Ideally, shared inquiry relies on interpretive questions. These are most readily gotten from works of fiction, which, as literary art, are characteristically ambiguous in meaning. However, as Figure 4 suggests, the method is also congenial to expository texts such as the encyclicals, which will more often suggest evaluative questions than interpretive ones.

The bishops claim (Economic Justice for All, section 25) that “Our faith is a pervasive reality to be practiced every day in homes, offices, factories, schools, and businesses...we cannot separate what we believe from how we act in the marketplace.” But in class we talked about the Briggs and Stratton executive who claimed that “personal religious faith has absolutely nothing to do with the basic economic decisions” that the managers of a company make. Who’s right?

Evaluative questions probe the student’s values, experience, and understanding of the world, testing these against each interpretation of the author’s meaning. Thus, the student discovers how these questions bear on his or her own life. The personal meaning for students that interpretive and evaluative questions acquire promotes thoughtful reflection and rewarding discussions, both of which are powerful inducements to significant learning.

In shared inquiry the instructor’s role is limited to getting the discussion started, promoting participation by all members of the class, keeping them focused on the text to avoid digression, and extracting the full potential of students’ interpretive or evaluative questions by asking derivative questions.¹¹ For example, the instructor might follow up on the interpretive question above by asking “Why would work be ‘the essential key’ to the solution of the social question?”

Shared inquiry’s basis for student learning through interpretive and evaluative discourse, rather than instruction from a “teacher”, thereby recommends it to business faculty who are open to integrating Catholic social thought into their ethics course but, lacking expertise in CSE, are wary of doing so.

3.4. Specify Learning Goals

The learning goal set in the conventional business ethics course is improved moral awareness and moral reasoning. The outcome sought for *BECSE* is a more ambitious one—to foster motivation for ethical behavior that can endure throughout a business career.

This goal assumes that a positive relationship exists between religiousness and moral awareness, moral reasoning, and moral behavior. While it remains for this relationship to be well established, it is a plausible one.¹² Kennedy and Lawton (1998), for example, have discovered “a negative correlation between intrinsic religiousness and willingness to behave unethically”, while Clark and

11. The instructor will have already “had his say” in a preceding lecture, in which a particular business ethics topic is examined through the lens of philosophical ethics.

12. This writer believes that plausibility, rather than proof, suffices to justify *BECSE*, because the “expected value” to students if *BECSE* achieves its learning goal is sufficiently high to outweigh the risk that it may not.

Dawson (1996) have demonstrated the influence of religiousness on ethical judgments and, possibly, behavioral intentions.¹³

The learning goal set for *BECSE* rests as well on two propositions:

1. Philosophical ethics derive solely from human reason and seek to *clarify* moral issues and *evaluate* moral conduct (DeGeorge, 1986). In contrast, religious ethics draw from scripture and strive to *motivate* and *sustain* moral conduct. Therefore, in a Catholic management education, the business ethics course should teach students not only how to clarify and evaluate moral issues, but also help motivate moral conduct throughout their business careers.
2. A business ethics course can help motivate moral conduct insofar as it presents the subject in a context that is familiar and personally meaningful to students. For many of our students, that context is their own religious worldview.¹⁴

Religious ethics sets morality within larger questions of human nature, purpose, and values. In contrast, secular ethics speaks in terms of relatively abstract and impersonal rules of moral logic, e.g., the categorical imperative and cost-benefit analysis, and thereby isolates itself from the fuller apprehension of reality that religion provides. As a result, students are unlikely to find in secular ethics a moral resource that is *personally* meaningful to them.¹⁵

A moral resource that is personally relevant is an individual's worldview. A worldview is a comprehensive vision of reality, or philosophy of life, grounded in one's answers to the most basic questions of human existence, such as Who are we? What is reality? Why do we suffer? What is the remedy for suffering? (Walsh & Middleton, 1984.) A worldview has motivating power because it appeals to conscience, not just intellect, which suggests that if we want to

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13. They cite three ways in which personal religiousness is thought to influence moral judgments: "the composition of deontological norms is a function of religious belief and training, the weighting of deontological and teleological norms may be affected by the relative importance of each within the framework of the individual's judgment process, and religiousness may limit the scope of options open to consideration." This influence may extend to moral behavior because "for many people, religiousness is a foundation for and background to ethical judgments and thus a source of motivation for ethical behavior."
 14. As DeGeorge (1986) observes, "The Judeo-Christian tradition may infuse American life so much that the general population are responsive to discussions of business ethics from a Christian or theological perspective...the general public accepts Kantianism or utilitarianism probably less than a Christian view of morality."
 15. Fort (1997) argues that an ethical framework that excludes religious viewpoints denies students a significant moral resource, and finds "no good reason for us to restrict persons from relying upon religion in making and justifying political and economic judgments. This means that theology ought to be a participant in debates about public matters, including business ethics. Theology's contributions will be as varied as the philosophical alternatives for business ethics. But that is exactly the kind of inclusiveness that should be the mark of the dialogue."

encourage students to live ethically in the business world, rather than simply learn about ethics in the classroom, we should not present the subject as a set of analytical abstractions, but as an integral component of the worldview held by, or at least familiar to, most of them. At Saint Mary's College, that is the Catholic Christian worldview (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Some Elements of the Christian Worldview

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All life originates from God. [Human Dignity]* • All material goods originate from God. [Universal Destination of Goods] • An understanding of the nature and potential of human beings. [Participation] • The proper relationship among human beings. [Solidarity, The Common Good, Option for the Poor, Subsidiarity] • The purpose and responsibilities of humans in God's creation. [Stewardship] |
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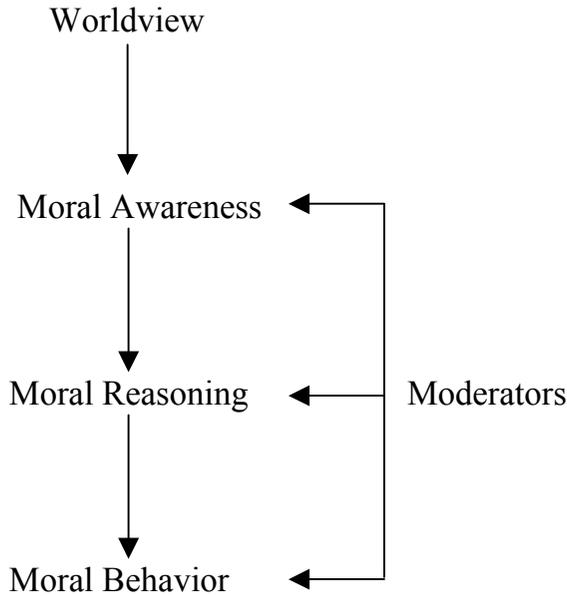
* Corresponding principles of Catholic social ethics are in brackets.

There is evidence that worldview plays a fundamental role in morality (Jensen, 1997; Emerson, 1996) and this idea supports the model of moral behavior used in the design of *BECSE*.¹⁶ In this model (Figure 6), moral awareness refers to one's ability to discern the moral content of a decision. Moral reasoning describes the ethic(s), e.g., utilitarian, Kantian, CSE, used to assess the morality of that decision. Moderators are situational factors such as personal integrity and corporate culture, which can influence moral awareness, moral reasoning, and moral behavior.¹⁷

16. Hartman (1997) perceives among ethicists movement toward a conception of moral behavior grounded in worldview. "The field of business ethics has grown toward religion, as philosophers have broadened their conception of their work from the clarification of terms, delineation of obligation, and uncovering of presuppositions...to include considerations of character, narrative, virtue, aspiration, and other dimensions of worldview. Also, Boylan (2001) has written a business ethics textbook within the context of a worldview-based methodology.

17. See, for example, Gioia (1992), wherein the author describes how behavioral moderators or "scripts" within Ford Motor Company's corporate culture led to a failure of moral judgement and action in handling the Pinto's exploding gas tank problem.

Figure 6: A Model of Moral Behavior



Differences between religious and non-religious worldviews, or among worldviews informed by different religions, can lead to differences in moral awareness, moral reasoning and moral conduct (Jensen, 1997; Weaver & Agle, 2002).¹⁸ Jensen, for example, found that Americans could be categorized into two basic worldviews, “progressive” and “orthodox”. Orthodox look to God for moral guidance, while progressives rely on human reason. She concluded that a religiously informed worldview not only influences moral reasoning, it also motivates behavior tending to sustain that worldview. Since the worldviews of many Saint Mary’s students make a connection between faith and daily life, offering them an ethical framework that appeals to their faith-based worldviews may inspire stronger and more enduring moral motivation than would a secular framework alone.

18. To illustrate, a team of St. Mary’s College business students were asked by a Catholic Worker community to devise a marketing strategy for the candle-making business that supported their charitable work. The team, aware of no moral issue, recommended that bank loans be used to finance the strategy. The Farm rejected this idea because, in their radical Catholic worldview, borrowing at interest was usury and, therefore, immoral.

3.5. Teaching and Learning Strategy

In Fink’s model, an effective teaching and learning strategy includes three kinds of activities: informational, reflective, and experiential. *BECSE* implements all of these using three teaching and learning techniques. First, a specific topic in business ethics is taught in lecture format following a philosophical business ethics textbook—a largely informational activity. Next, in shared inquiry, students and instructor together interpret and evaluate what a particular papal encyclical or pastoral letter has to say about that topic from the perspective of Catholic social ethics. This activity produces significant learning through individual, collaborative, and critical reflection on the meaning and moral implications of the text. It also lays the intellectual foundation for a truly significant experiential learning experience—the “Street Retreat”.

Significant learning is active learning, or “learning that involves not only receiving information, but anything that engages students in learning experiences and reflection on what they are learning.” (Fink, 2002) The Street Retreat is a form of active learning in which students experience, first-hand, San Francisco’s notorious Tenderloin, the most socially and economically deprived district in the city, and afterwards reflect upon their experience. In the isolation of the classroom, students comprehend poverty and its attendant social decay only intellectually, but in the Tenderloin they confront it personally, thus opening themselves to a more powerful learning experience. In the process, they discover that what they are observing—in this case, economic injustice—is no longer merely a classroom abstraction, but something real that can be interpreted and understood meaningfully in relation to the content of the course.¹⁹

On their Street Retreat, students undertake a one-day practicum at the St. Anthony Foundation, located in the Tenderloin. There, they put Catholic social ethics into practice by serving and engaging with the unemployed, the working poor, the homeless, the physically and mentally disabled, and others living at the economic margins of society. Afterward, they take a fact-finding walk through the Tenderloin and its adjacent, more affluent districts—Nob Hill, Union Square, and the Financial District—and note features of each district and its inhabitants that they find economically and morally significant.

Students are asked to regard San Francisco as a reasonably representative microcosm of urban, capitalist America, and use their first-hand observations of the city to write a reflection paper to 1) assess, compare, and contrast the morality of the American economic system from the perspectives of both CSE and Rawlsian justice, and discern the implications of each ethical system for the

19. Unfortunately, as Miles et. al. (2000) observe, “The tremendous potential for deep, enriching, and analytically critical discussions of social justice issues by the application of Catholic social thought to student experiences in the community... has yet to be tapped by most Catholic institutions of higher education, let alone by business schools within those institutions”. An excellent illustration of the appropriateness, benefits, and practicality of integrating service learning into the business ethics course can be found in Collins (1995).

behavior of business and 2) make specific recommendations for actions businesses can and should undertake, in their own self-interest, to improve the economic well-being of residents of the Tenderloin.²⁰

Students' essays indicate, almost uniformly, that their Tenderloin experience is enlightening and often motivating. It is striking how frequently they use such phrases as "I never knew", "I have come to understand", and "It opened my eyes", signaling that significant learning has occurred. One is also heartened by vignettes of their personal encounters with the guests of St. Anthony's. Perhaps the most gratifying outcome of these is to dispel the naive stereotypes many business students have of the poor, the homeless, and otherwise marginalized stakeholders in the economy—a salutary attitudinal change, indeed, for these future capitalists, managers, and policy makers, some of whom will be in a position one day to affect the lives of these people, for better or worse.²¹ As one young man recounts:

In St. Anthony's dining room, I met a man who fought in World War II with the RAF...I thought, well, the war got to him and now he's here in a soup kitchen. But then he pulled out two books he wrote since the war and he said you can still get them at Barnes and Noble...He showed me a picture of him shaking hands with the Mayor of San Francisco, and they each held up one of his books ...I learned that day that because of the stereotyping of people living in the Tenderloin as drug addicts and alcoholics, you can completely marginalize them.

Another vignette affirms the power of personal encounter with the Tenderloin to help business students find common ground with people so far removed from their own world:

The whole experience was a real eye-opener. I began to see these people not as poor or homeless, but as human beings—people like you and me, not some trash to be thrown out by society...It is strange to view something as large as the economy in such a personal manner. This experience has forever changed my perspective on poverty.

Some students are motivated by their experience to act:

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20. Rawlsian ethics and Catholic social ethics each ask three questions to judge the morality of an economic system. The former asks (1) Is there equal treatment for all under the law? (2) Is there equal economic opportunity for all? (3) If social or economic inequalities exist, did they result in compensating benefits for the least advantaged members of society? CSE asks, instead, (1) What does the economy do *for* its people? (2) What does the economy do *to* its people? (3) How well does the economy allow people to *participate* in it?
21. From the perspective of Catholic social ethics, the traditional notion of business stakeholders must be enlarged to accommodate the more inclusive, communitarian conception understood in the Principle of the Common Good, by which business behavior affects, ultimately, all of society, including the poor, weak, and vulnerable. There are also practical reasons why poverty belongs on the business agenda, and the poor on its list of stakeholders. Economic growth suffers from the poor being neither an attractive market for business nor able to participate productively in labor markets. Moreover, the very legitimacy of the free enterprise system is jeopardized if it is perceived as an unending struggle between the rich and the poor.

While standing in line to get a meal in the dining room, I overheard two guys talking. One said, “I know it isn’t much but because of them, you and I get to live another day.” I was so moved by this man that I decided to volunteer at St. Anthony’s, in hopes of not changing the world, but making a difference in the life of people like him.

Each of these comments suggests that service in the Tenderloin produces significant ethical learning. Although students enter that world only briefly, the encounter is intensely personal, making palpable to them, often for the first time, the ugly and unexpectedly proximate reality of economic injustice, which they are unlikely to soon forget.²²

4. Student Survey Results

Because the design of *BECSE* has stabilized only recently, a rigorous analysis of student attitudes toward the course is not yet feasible. However, the results of an informal survey, representing four consecutive *BECSE* classes, are worth noting by business ethics teachers who may wish to introduce a similar course (Table 1).

Table 1: Survey Data for *BECSE* Enrollees

- Roman Catholic 76%
- Unfamiliar with Catholic social teaching 58%
- Agree: Religious beliefs should influence decisions on business ethics issues 68%
- Agree: Business majors should not graduate from a Catholic college without reflecting on management practices and theories from the perspectives of Catholic social teaching 31%
- CSE content of *BECSE* made it:

	<i>BECSE</i> Class	Conventional Ethics Classes	Combined Classes
Less attractive:	5%	26%	15%
No difference:	<u>38%</u> 43%	<u>66%</u> 92%	<u>52%</u> 67%
More attractive:	<u>57%</u> 100%	<u>8%</u> 100%	<u>33%</u> 100%

22. Remarkably, the Street Retreat, though it lasts only a single day, has a consistently powerful impact on students’ moral awareness and, in some cases, their moral motivation. This means that *BECSE* can offer students a truly significant service learning experience that might not be practicable for either them or the instructor in the extended team project format these activities often require.

1. The stated religious preference of three-quarters of the seventy-four students who have taken *BECSE* is Roman Catholic. Yet, at registration, a majority of them were unfamiliar with Catholic social ethics. That is, their survey responses indicated they did not distinguish between Catholic *salvific* doctrine, with which most were familiar, and Catholic *social* doctrine.
2. Prior to registration, students were generally unaware that CSE was germane to business ethics. Some illustrative comments: “Catholic social ethics does not seem to fit in the corporate world,” “I’m not Catholic. Unfamiliarity with this religion would disadvantage me in a business course,” and “I don’t need any more religion courses.” Such misgivings among students *at a Catholic college* suggest that faculty attempting to introduce CSE-informed business courses and obtain economically viable enrollments for them, are likely to face a “pioneer marketing” challenge of dispelling doubts among potential enrollees about the relevance of CSE to their business education.
3. About two-thirds of all enrollees in *BECSE* thought their religious beliefs should influence their business decisions. This suggests that CSE content, whether or not it is decisive, is a relevant factor in their choice between *BECSE* and the conventional business ethics class.
4. *BECSE* students were asked if they agreed with the proposition that “business majors should not graduate from a Catholic college without reflecting on management practices and theories from the perspectives of Catholic social teaching.” They rejected the proposal by almost two-to-one, largely because it implied to them that a Catholicized business ethics course might be required rather than taken as an elective. Insofar as their counterparts at other Catholic institutions share our business students’ sentiment against a required “Catholic” business ethics course, it would be wise to offer both conventional and CSE-informed versions of the course.
5. Students in both *BECSE* and the conventional ethics section were asked how they felt about the former’s CSE content at the time they registered. A majority in *BECSE* said it made the course more attractive, a minority was indifferent to it, and very few thought it unattractive. In contrast, most students in the conventional ethics section were either indifferent to, or put off by, the idea of CSE in the business ethics course.

Judging by their stated attitudes and enrollment pattern, a significant proportion (48%, the combined “more attractive” and “less attractive” proportions shown in Table 1) of our business students are not indifferent to inclusion of CSE in the business ethics course, and they want to be able to choose one version or the other. How significant that preference is for the particular version they choose is unclear; but given the option, students have consistently enrolled in *BECSE* in numbers that suggest it is justified both economically and as a welcome expression of our Catholic mission.

4.1. Assessment Procedures

To assess what students have learned about philosophical business ethics, conventional written exams are used. However, students are evaluated on their understanding of Catholic social ethics in relation to business ethics by their degree of active participation in shared inquiry and by the thoughtfulness of their reflection papers on the Street Retreat, both of which are indicators of significant active learning.

5. Conclusion

Given the recent introduction of *BECSE*, no formal attempt has been made yet to determine if and how students’ engagement with Catholic social ethics influences their moral behavior after graduation. That question may be answered eventually in a planned longitudinal study of graduates as they move through their careers.

Nevertheless, religion is an important social institution that affects the beliefs and behaviors of many people. By offering *BECSE* to interested students, we surely do them a service in strengthening their awareness and appreciation of Catholic social ethics as a moral resource for their business careers—one conceivably as compelling, and enduring, as their own religious faith.

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