Charity and Justice: Christian Economy and the Just Ordering of the Commandments

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A command such as "do not steal" cannot of itself be the condition for an economic ethic. Instead, it requires the virtues of faith, hope, and especially charity for its intelligibility.

The Divine Economy: The Order of Charity

The sources for a Christian economy are the virtues of charity and justice, the practices of repentance and reconciliation embedded in the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, and the narrative of God's self-revelation in Jesus and his continual presence in the life of the church. These three sources are not fundamentally different, for they all assume the centrality of Jesus' presence to us. These three sources also assume the presence of certain social institutions for our sense of moral agency, primarily the church and the neighborhood.

The Centrality of Jesus

For Christians, a good human life is discovered in the blessedness pronounced by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. All of our actions are to be directed toward such beatitude. For only a blessed life can ultimately be a happy life. Jesus' blessings are eschatological verifications of forms of life pleasing to God. (1) One of the best articulations of this vision is found in the work of Thomas Aquinas, who took these blessings as the heart of a Christian social ethic. He wrote,

... the discourse given by the Lord on the Mount contains all that a Christian needs to conduct his life. In it man's interior motions are perfectly regulated. For after announcing blessedness as the end, and recommending the dignity of the Apostles by whom the gospel teaching was to be promulgated, he regulated man's interior motions, firstly in regard to himself and secondly in regard to his neighbor. (2)

The Lord of the Sermon on the Mount pronouncing blessedness is the central image of the moral life. This vision properly orders nature.

For Thomas, we cannot fully embody perfect moral virtue without the gift of grace which is the new law of the gospel. This new law is the life of Jesus present to the community of faith through his ongoing presence mediated by the Holy Spirit. The significance of Jesus for economics is not merely that he gives rules but that he himself rules. He orders a person's actions so that he is directed toward his proper, and ultimate, end - the love of God. Contained within this proper end is an ordering of one's life to one's neighbor. Thus a properly oriented moral action will be congruent with the order of charity.

The Virtues of Charity and Justice

Charity is not a formal principle; it names the relationship between the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit which we can participate in by grace. Charity is the life of God, and it is the structure upon which creation rests. Because of this we should not be surprised that Thomas explains the order of charity before he discusses the natural virtue of justice. This is significant because under the virtue of justice Thomas develops rules for ordering economic relations. However, these rules cannot be explained by the virtue of justice alone; they also require the virtue of charity. This fundamentally qualifies the ancients' political economy. (3)

Thomas's discussion of justice begins with the traditional Roman definition as articulated by the jurist Ulpian, where justice is rendering to each person his or her due. Consistent with this classical definition, Thomas defines justice as "some work adequate to another according to some mode of equality." (4) Justice then is a right ordering based on some rule for recognizing the equality between people and things. However, Thomas drastically alters this order by finding the ultimate good to which all things are to be ordered to exist outside human nature, in God. This poses a serious problem for the traditional rendering of justice. As MacIntyre notes, Thomas does not find our ultimate good to be related to any "state available in this created world." Instead, Thomas draws upon Scripture to argue that the summum bonum is God. This could leave the soul finding itself "directed beyond all finite goods, unsatisfiable by those goods, and yet able to find nothing beyond them to satisfy it," and thus in a state of "permanent dissatisfaction." (5) This permanent dissatisfaction was exacerbated in Thomas's understanding of the moral life because of "a rooted tendency to disobedience in the will and distraction by passion which causes obscuring of the reason and on occasion systematic cultural deformation." However, suggests MacIntyre, rather
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than leading to despair or the loss of any intelligible conception of human nature,

. . . it is in fact this discovery of willful evil which makes the achievement of the human end possible. How so? The acknowledgment by oneself of radical defect is a necessary condition for one’s reception of the virtues of faith, hope and charity. It is only the kind of knowledge which faith provides, the kind of expectation which hope provides, and the capacity for friendship with other human beings and with God which is the outcome of charity which can provide the other virtues with what they need to become genuine excellences, informing a way of life in and through which the good and the best can be achieved. The self-revelation of God in the events of the scriptural history and the gratuitous grace through which that revelation is appropriated, so that an individual can come to recognize his or her place within that same history, enable such individuals to recognize also that prudence, justice, temperateness and courage are genuine virtues, that the apprehension of the natural law was not illusory and that the moral life up to this point requires to be corrected in order to be completed but not displaced. (6)

Repentance gives our lives integrity because in repenting we acknowledge the ruptures in our lives and are prepared to receive the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. These virtues come to us as a gift and not as an achievement. They do not arise from our own integrity but through confession of the lack of continuity our lives possess. Faith gives knowledge that our lives can be recognized within God’s life. Hope expects continuity, constancy, and permanence. Charity establishes friendship with God and our neighbor. Once our lives are founded on these grace-infused virtues, then we can properly order the natural virtues. Natural virtues alone, such as justice or prudence, cannot establish a Christian economic ethic. The natural virtues assume the narrative of God’s self-revelation of which our knowledge implies the infusion of faith, hope, and charity. This is God’s economy, and it is present in the material practices of the sacraments.

Baptism, Repentance, and Communion-Reconciliation

In baptism we receive faith and recognize our place in God’s economy. This recognition is sealed, strengthened, and renewed in the celebration of the Eucharist. The blessed meal is our participation in the life of God. Such a meal makes us holy and cultivates in us the practice of koinonia which is both our communion around the table and our communion with God.

Koinonia can be translated as participation, fellowship, or communion. The narrative contexts for this practice are found in the Acts of the Apostles 2:43-47 and 4:32-37 and in 2 Peter 1:4. These passages convey the double movement of a Christian economy: our life with our neighbors is a participation in the life of God, and our life with God is a participation in the life of our neighbors. In the passages in Acts people are converted as a response to Peter’s preaching of the gospel. The result is “they held all things koina” (2:44). This is not surprising because we were already told that these new believers devoted themselves to “koinonia.” Precisely what this devotion to koinonia is we do not know. However, a description of it is found in Acts 4:32, where it is related to the believer’s relationship with her or his property: “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.” The contrast here is between holding our property “idin” - as our own - and holding all things “koina” - in common. The first possibility speaks of one’s property as one’s own. The second sees one’s property as a participation within the community of faith. (7)

The term koinonia refers not only to one’s participation in the community of faith but also to one’s participation in the life of God. For when 2 Peter informs us that all things that we need for life and godliness have been given to us, we are reminded that all that is given to us is so that we might be “koinonia” of the divine nature. This participation in the life of God includes not only what is needed for a pious, spiritual life (eusebeia) but also what is needed for life itself (2). The things necessary here are not only spiritual; otherwise there would be no need to include the z with the eusebeia. Instead, a pious life with God implies participation in the material processes of life itself, concrete, material participation in the life of one’s neighbor. This double movement of the life of charity finds its ultimate expression in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

The virtue of a charitable justice should find its measure of equality in the communion practiced at the Eucharist. The reconciliation embedded in the Eucharist is a meta-practice that renders intelligible a Christian’s daily activities of producing and consuming. What we discover embedded in the Eucharist is a glimpse and foretaste of the ultimate good for God’s creation. Resources are not scarce or subject to competition, but everyone can be satisfied and each person’s satisfaction only increases that of his neighbor. Distribution is made subject only to the condition of one’s baptism and willingness to repent and seek reconciliation.

A Christian economy assumes a life of charity ordered toward God and one’s neighbor. Such a discovery will also entail a broader conception of the moral life; we then recognize the natural law is not illusory. The natural law is the creation’s inevitable participation in God’s economy in varying degrees. Christians should not be surprised that such participation is discovered even outside faith in such virtues as prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. But even these natural virtues have their rightful place
within the order of charity. The Ten Commandments themselves give us this order, for the first table directs our lives toward God and the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, while the second table directs us to our neighbor, and such a direction produces "natural" virtues. But these natural virtues are not separate from the theological particularities implied by the first table. In fact the negative commands of the second table assume the virtues implicit in the first table; otherwise the negative commands become "arbitrary prohibitions." (8) This means that commands such as "do not steal" and "do not covet your neighbor's possessions" cannot in and of themselves be the condition for an economic ethic. Instead, they require the virtues of faith, hope, and especially charity for their intelligibility. (9) And these virtues assume a particular narrative, the narrative of God's revelation in Jesus.

A just ordering of economic life assumes the ordering of charity. This assumption entails the specifics of Christian theology, for charity is not natural to us. As Thomas put it, "charity since it greatly exceeds proportion to human nature does not depend on any natural virtues, but only on the grace of the Holy Spirit infusing it." (10) This statement of Thomas's poses a problem for moral agency because it could be misconstrued to suggest that the human will is either forced to be charitable or reduced to the status of a mere instrument for the Spirit's activity. Thomas rejects both of these positions and suggests instead that "it is chiefly necessary for charitable action to exist in us that some habitual form be superadded to potential nature inclining itself to charitable action and to do it with ease and pleasure." (11) This requires then that charity be a virtue and a virtue that is both outside of us - we cannot achieve it through our natural powers - and at the same time within us, our interior action.

Because the virtue of charity is both extra nos and intra nos, it has a motion similar to that of the biblical practice of koinonia. In fact, Thomas defines charity as the divine essence and gives it a Trinitarian determination. "Charity can be in us neither naturally, nor through acquisition by the natural powers but by the infusion of the Holy Spirit who is the love of the Father and the Son and the participation of whom in us is created charity." (12) As the natural law is our participation in the divine reasons for creation, the life of charity is our participation in the divine life itself. Perfect justice cannot be had without the life of charity.

Thomas does not explicitly state that justice requires charity for its completion when he develops the natural virtue of justice in the Secunda Secundae. This could mislead someone into thinking that Thomas argues for a justice separate from charity. Then we could develop an economic ethic based on the natural moral virtues alone such that justice orders relations within political and economic society and charity orders relations among Christians within the Church. But this two-tiered interpretation of Thomas cannot make sense of his discussion either of charity or of injustice. For Thomas has already explicitly stated in the Summa Theologica that charity is necessary for all the moral virtues. (13) And we see implicitly how charity is necessary for justice in his discussion of injustice. He defines injustice as a person wanting to have "more of goods, namely wealth and honor, and less of evils, namely labor and toil." (14) This particular vice requires restitution not only for the good of the political or economic order but for salvation itself. (15) To seek to accumulate external goods without labor jeopardizes one's salvation. The virtue of justice is obviously not merely a matter of natural morality but central to salvation itself.

The Just Ordering of Commands

Having established the narrative context within which the virtues of charity and justice reside, we can now better understand some of Christianity's traditional rules about economics.

Do Not Steal or Covet Your Neighbor's Property

The Ten Commandments occupy a significant place in Christian economy. Their meaning, however, is not self-evident. These commandments are unique in that they are both "revealed" and "natural." The sequence of the ten reveals the order of charity, which should be natural to us even though it often seems otherwise. Our first motion should be toward God. Thus the first three commandments remind us to have no strange gods, not to take the name of God in vain, and to remember to keep holy the Lord's day. Only when the virtues of faith and hope are established as we direct our lives toward God can we then turn toward our neighbors in charity. This leads us to the second table of the Ten Commandments. Because this order of charity establishes a narrative context that makes the commandments intelligible, a premodern Christian interpretation of the command not to steal is startling in comparison to property laws in a capitalist society. Thomas argued that "by natural law whatever people have in abundance should sustain the poor." Therefore if a clear urgent necessity arises, someone can take the property of another even secretly and such taking does not have the nature of theft. (16) The basis for such an understanding of "do not steal" resides in the order of charity.

Our property, like our virtue, finds its purpose in the life of charity. Thus, any right to our property is directed by charity. We are to use our property in service to ourselves, our family, and our immediate neighbors. If we have a neighbor in need and we do not share our goods with him, our neighbor does not steal by taking our surplus property to meet his basic needs. No violation of the seventh commandment occurs. However, any neighbor who is unwilling to share from his surplus with his neighbor has violated the tenth commandment. God has given him his property not as an inalienable right but as a means for him to participate in a life of charity. By refusing to share
his goods with others in need, he covets what actually belongs to them.

For a similar reason, Christian tradition forged rules about a just wage. A just wage was what an employer owed an employee. Since the just wage regulated exchanges between people, it obviously fell under the description of the virtue of justice. But the mode of equality by which such exchanges were regulated was also normed by the demands of charity. Because a worker's labor contributes to the common good, he should be rewarded for his labor with a wage sufficient for the basic necessities of life and enough surplus that he can use his property to contribute to the common good of both his family and neighborhood. An employer who does not pay such a wage commits intrinsically evil acts. They are intrinsically evil because they are deprived of any possibility of being ordered toward the life of charity. Even though the laborer's skills may command a lesser wage on the basis of a market analysis, this alone cannot determine just reimbursement. A wage that does not allow a laborer's work to be directed toward the good of his family or neighbors does not allow him to participate in the life of charity. It would be better for him not to work and live from the gratuity of others than to work under such circumstances where his actions are made intelligible by another's intrinsically evil actions. His refusal to work under these conditions would increase the possibility of the internal good of charity whereas his work in an unjust environment would lose all connection with the possibility of any internal goods.

Lend, Expecting Nothing in Return (Luke 6:35)

Central to the life of charity for premodern theologians was the ancient philosophic and biblical admonition to lend without expectation of gain. The usury prohibition was the dominant economic regulation put forth by the church until the rise of modern economics. In fact, modern economists freed the market from the theological and political interference that the usury prohibition represented. Adam Smith objected to the usury prohibition, arguing that a fee should be paid for the use of money since gain could be made from it. (17) Jeremy Bentham developed his economic ideas opposing the church's traditional stance against usury when he argued in "Defence of Usury" that only a person's will to enter into contracts should limit contracts. (18) The influential economists Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, Ludwig von Mises, and the early Joseph Schumpeter all argued that the medieval church's effort to regulate economic matters based on the usury principle revealed the irrationality of theological or political interference in the market. (19) Of the modern economists, only John Maynard Keynes seems to find anything, good to say about the ancient rule proscribing usury. (20) The reounding judgment by the economists on the church's traditional teaching was that it was irrational and was based on the false assumption that economics involved a zero sum game where any loan was by nature exploitative of the one who received it. Thus, the economists suggested, the theologians were incapable of recognizing that loans could be productive.

This, however, is a false reading of the theologians' efforts to integrate the ancient philosophic prohibition of usury into Luke 6:35. Thomas Aquinas clearly recognized that both the lender and the borrower could benefit from the arrangement. Thus he wrote,

He that entrusts his money to a merchant or craftsman so as to form a kind of society does not transfer the ownership of his money to them, for it remains his so that at his risk the merchant speculates with it, or the craftsman uses it for his craft and consequently he may lawfully demand as something belonging to him part of the profits derived from his money. (21)

Thomas did not argue that profit could not be made by employing one's money in enterprising activities. What the ancient prohibition sought to insure was a connection between one's labor and one's compensation. As Albert the Great, Thomas's teacher, stated it, "Usury is a sin of supererogation; it is against charity because the usurer without labor, suffering or fear gathers riches from the labor, suffering and vicissitudes of his neighbor." (22) And Thomas notes that usury is intrinsically evil because "we ought to treat every man as our neighbor and brother, especially in the State of the Gospel whereunto we are called." (23)

The principle behind the ancient prohibition is not as absurd as the modern economists tell us it is. The principle is quite simple; money does no work, people do. So when we assume that our money is working for us to make more money, we are not describing accurately God's economy. We lose the ability to describe how our lives are embedded in the narratives of others. The food that we eat, the clothes we wear, the transportation available to us, clean restrooms, floors, and so on - all these things are provided for us without any awareness on our part of other people's practices which make such external goods possible. We cannot name our debts. Thus we cannot pray well. We lose the possibility of cultivating internal goods.

The usury prohibition did not deny the legitimacy of profit. To use one's money to assist another in a joint venture could be an act of charity. But to use one's money only to make money, especially when it is made through layoffs, exploitation, and the production of unjust things, is intrinsically evil because it cannot be ordered to that which should become natural to us - a life of charity.

Buying and Selling

The same narrative that prompted the Christian tradition's odd notion of stealing and the usury prohibition also seeks to order our buying and selling. According to the early church father Tertullian, how a person earned his or her living was a matter that required examination before baptism. Not only were Christians to refrain from the production of idolatrous commodities, they were also to re-
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frain from trades that would require mendacity or covetousness. (24)

St. Thomas sought to regulate buying and selling with the virtue of justice by emphasizing the importance of truth-telling in exchanges. He also guarded against greed by prohibiting trading merely for the sake of gain.

Trading, considered in itself, has a certain debasement attaching thereto, in so far as, by its very nature, it does not imply a virtuous or necessary end. Nevertheless gain which is the end of trading though not implying by its nature anything virtuous or necessary, does not, in itself, connote anything sinful or contrary to virtue: wherefore nothing prevents gain from being directed to some necessary or even virtuous end and thus trading becomes lawful. (25)

This regulation on selling and buying reveals the role of charity in exchanges. Trading can never be an end in itself. It is a means and thus gets its moral species from the end it serves. While a number of legitimate ends are present to make trading moral, such as "payment for labor" and the desire to serve the common good, all such legitimate ends will also point to humanity's ultimate end - blessedness. And this cannot be attained without charity. Such is God's economy.

Conclusion

The first task of any Christian reflection on the economy is not to speculate whether Christianity sides with capitalism or socialism but to seek to interpret our "economic activity," that is, our producing, buying, selling, and consuming, within the larger narrative of God's economy. The first question Christian theologians should ask is, Given God's economy toward us, does how our inevitable participation in the material goods of this world reflect that economy? (26) God's economy does not imply a blueprint for how Christians should organize the world economically. It does not give us any specific public policy easily translatable into terms either Capitol Hill or Wall Street will find useful. This is not surprising because God's economy is ultimately not about the profitability of things but about their proper enjoyment.

The first task of a Christian economics is to narrate the order of charity, which is to move our will and intellect toward Christ. It is to orient our life toward beatitude, toward living out of and into the grace that Jesus gave his disciples. This ordering of creation is the life of charity that lives, moves, and has its being from the Triune life. Our lives are to participate in God's as he communicates his life to us. A condensed version of this story is found in the practical wisdom that we are to love God and our neighbor as ourselves.

Such practical wisdom assumes certain social structures. (27) The church contains the necessary means to orient our lives toward God and thus to fulfill the basic command to love God found in the first three commandments of the Decalogue. We should not expect the state to enforce the virtue of charity. But we should expect the church to demand this order of charity from its members. That is our politics. The first social institution that bears the practices of a charitable justice is the church.

Apart from the church, the family, and a limited role for the state, the Ten Commandments assume a central role for neighborhoods. God does not direct us toward citizens or comrades as much as he orders relations with our neighbors. Jesus' summary of the law - love God and love your neighbor as yourself - assumes first an institution that will assist us in charity toward God, which can only be the church, and then charity toward our neighbors, which assumes neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods have been vastly diminished because of the hegemonic power of the nation-state and the global market in all our lives. Michael Ignatieff has made this argument in his compelling critique of the welfare state, The Needs of Strangers. Ignatieff describes how the welfare state mediates goods to the needy and turns "relationships" into contractual transactions among strangers. He writes,

The mediated quality of our relationship seems necessary to both of us. [The needy] are dependent upon the state, not upon me, and we are both glad of it. Yet I am also aware of how this mediation walls us off from each other. We are responsible for each other, but we are not responsible to each other. My responsibilities towards them are mediated through a vast division of labor. In my name a social worker climbs the stairs to their rooms and makes sure they are as warm and as clean as they can be persuaded to be. . . . It is this solidarity among strangers, this transformation through the division of labour of needs into rights and rights into care that gives us whatever fragile basis we have for saying that we live in a moral community. (28)

Citizens as strangers is indeed a fragile basis for moral community. It may be preferable to citizens as strangers competing for basic goods that the so-called free-market state seeks to produce. However, to imagine that the disorder created by the welfare state is the only alternative to the greater disorder of a state-instituted deregulated market is merely to accept one state of disorder in place of a greater one.

Both the welfare state and the free-market state destroy neighborhoods. In both political configurations corporations are the central actors. Malls can be built, incinerators established, educational institutions closed or consolidated, and neighbors have little recourse. "Public" education seeks parents' participation in the school system only through bake sales and fund-raisers. We are
constant alienation and isolated from the tasks of everyday life, which are given over to the professionals and experts. The only control remaining is the occasional vote for those who will rule us. How can we fulfill the command to love our neighbors when we are no longer neighbors but strangers?

In such a world, not only does a Christian economy make sense but its implementation has an urgent necessity. Neither through the necessary violence of the wage contract of classical liberalism (29), nor through an inevitable and bloody revolution based on the contradiction between the mode of production and mode of exchange, can such an economy occur. It occurs through the charitable justice found in baptism and Eucharist actually lived by the church and extended beyond its borders when it is given away.(30)

Notes

1. By "eschatological verification" I mean that Jesus' blessings are final pronouncements of vindication on persons and forms of activity that God judges as constituting God's rule.

2. Summa Theologica IaIIae, q. 108, art. 3.


4. Summa Theologica IaIIae, q. 57, art. 1.


6. Ibid., 140.

7. The extent to which these passages should be viewed as common ownership has been challenged by Luke Timothy Johnson in his Sharing Possessions: Mandate and Symbol of Faith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), and his "Acts of the Apostles", Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 5 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992). He sees in these passages a rhetorical strategy by Luke to portray the early Christians as exhibiting the ideal of Greek friendship, which has misled Christian theologians to be fascinated with common ownership. Johnson seeks to recover the tradition of almsgiving as practiced by Judaism in the place of the ideal of common ownership. Justo González has subjected Johnson's position to criticism in his Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origins, Significance and Use of Money (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), 80-86. He believes the early Christian practice of koinonia involved relinquishing one's possessions not merely for the sake of a common bond of elitist philosophers but to meet the needs of the poor. The difference between Johnson and González seems to be more a matter of emphasis than of discontinuity.

8. MacIntyre, Three Rival Versions, 139. See also After Virtue, 2d ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,1984), 119.

9. This point has also been made persuasively by Servais Pinckaers in his Sources of Christian Ethics (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), where he challenges the ethics of obligation that has come to characterize Catholic moral theology. It is also found in John Paul II's reading of the rich young ruler in part 1 of Veritatis Splendor, in Origins, CNS Documentary Source 23, no. 18 (1993): 297-334.

10. Summa Theologica IaIIae, q. 24, art. 3.

11. Ibid., q. 23, art. 2.

12. Ibid., q. 24, art. 3.

13. Ibid., IaIIae, q. 65, art. 2: "all the infused moral virtues also depend on charity." He states this in the context of a discussion of "infused prudence" where he argues that even the moral virtue of prudence requires the grace of the Holy Spirit for its completion. Thus, even the acquired virtues require "infusion" if they are to properly ordered to our ultimate end.

14. Ibid., IaIIae, q. 59, art. 1.

15. Ibid., q. 62, art. 1-4.

16. Ibid., q. 66, art. 7.


21. Summa Theologica IaIIae, q. 78, art. 1, rep. obj. 5.

23. *Summa Theologica* IaIIae, q. 78, art. 1.


25. *Summa Theologica* IaIIae q. 77, art. 4.


29. See for instance Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, where he argues that owners and laborers are locked in conflict, with the advantage given to the owners ([New York: Modern Library, 1965], 66-67). Likewise David Ricardo suggests, in his essay “On Wages,” that over-population remains the key problem with workers and is only exacerbated by policies that unnaturally support more poor than the market can care for (such as the Poor Laws). Thus he argues for their abolition “with the least violence” afflicted upon the poor as is possible (*Principles of Political Economy* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], 107).

ON BOARD THE ARBELLA, ON THE ATLANTIC OCEAN. By the Hon. John Winthrop Esqr. In his passage (with a great company of Religious people, of which Christian tribes he was the Brave Leader and famous Governor;) from the Island of Great Britaine to New-England in the North America. Anno 1630. CHRISTIAN CHARITIE. A Modell hereof. God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence, hath soe disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poore, some high and eminent in power and According to this definition, justice is the mechanical process of the structure of law â€“ set in place and agreed to by the people of the State. Another definition is concerned with the value inherent in â€˜justâ€™ behavior. One distinction between these two definitions is the difference between an individual viewpoint and the larger view of the society. Either view incorporates the concept of moral judgment; â€˜goodâ€™ as opposed to â€˜bad.â€™ Man has recognized the importance of justice in his society since the earliest of times. In order to serve justice, there has toâ€¦show more contentâ€¦ I found Judge Keen was the only judge implementing the criminal justice system as it should be. This order limits the sphere of justice and so allows for acts of charity motivated by love for God. If we do not recognize this distinction, we reduce all charitable acts to acts of justice and therefore ignore the most important debt of all: the debt humans owe to God that can only be repaid by loving Him and our neighbor. Discover the world’s research. 17+ million members. Wonder, as they understood it, involves not just a feeling of astonishment but a question about what is real or true. Plato typically asked questions of the form "What is X?", where "X" may stand for "knowledge," "justice," or "courage," for instance, but grammatical form ...Â The orders of grace and nature are thus on different plains. This ontology creates an extrinsicism between God and the world.