

My Personal Moral Compass: Navigating Ethical Ambiguity

A Course on Thinking Ethical Problems

Course Guide 2015

A. Introduction

Personal Moral Compass is a one-year-long systematic course in Moral Issues. It was previously organised under SPI (Singapore Pastoral Institute) and has been running for 4 years already. This is the second year that Caritas Singapore is organising this course.

B. Objective

Personal Moral Compass is for all Catholics and all people of goodwill interested in formation in the foundations of Ethics.

This course is particularly targeted for that segment of society on whom the future generations depend: those involved in guiding and forming others, and those for whom this formation would be particularly pertinent at work or in ministry: these would be inclusive of (and not restricted to) *young adult group leaders, lay ministry leaders, youth and adult faith formators / coordinators, catechists, teachers, counsellors, family life workers, biomedical researchers, medical professionals, humanitarian aid workers, as well as tertiary, junior college and polytechnic students; in particular those pursuing the medical, life science, legal, and social science disciplines.*

The objective of this course is for participants, to understand and to articulate the fundamentals of moral thinking with greater clarity. At the same time, it is hoped that participants will come to recognise that the Christian moral tradition is less an arbitrary set of rules imposed by Church authorities, and more a treasure-trove of discoveries and descriptions of observed laws which depict what best encourages human persons to thrive.

We trust that this understanding will be translated into the daily experience of participants and through them into the lives of their family and friends, in the schools and workplaces, and in their communities and society-at-large.

C. Eligibility

There is no prerequisite for application to the modules. All participants are welcome. Where places are limited, priority will be given to those who are actively forming others; to this end, endorsement from the relevant parish priest or leader in the parish or diocesan community / ministry / organisation will count toward this consideration.

Participants who attend at least 75% of the classes in all the modules are eligible for a certificate of attendance at the end of the course.

D. Lecturer

Our lecturer is Dominican Moral Theologian, Father David Garcia OP. Fr David Garcia lectures at the Major Seminary and Catholic Theological Institute of Singapore in Moral Theology and is a well-known speaker who has addressed a spectrum of issues affecting society ranging from family life and social justice bioethics; he has worked and/or is working with various church organisations including CTIS, Catholic Medical Guild, Family Life Society and Caritas Singapore.

E. Venue

Classes will be at 55 Waterloo Street, Catholic Centre. The nearest MRT station is Bras Basah Station (Circle Line).

Actual room venue will be advised upon the confirmation of participant's registration.

F. Date and Time

All classes for all Modules – 1 to 6 are held on Tuesday nights, from 7:30 to 9:30p.m.

G. Programme Structure

Personal Compass is a year-long modular course on ethical issues. There are a total of 6 Modules each lasting 6 weeks. There are no assignments or coursework to be submitted.

It is recommended that participants cover the course material and attend all six modules. Alternatively, participants may attend any missed modules in subsequently years as interest and exigencies allow.

Module 1. My Personal Moral Compass Dates: 6, 13, 20, 27 January, 3, 10 February 2015

1. Who Says What Is Right and Wrong?

*Introduction to ethics and morality
Today's culture and its ethical beliefs*

2. My Personal Decisions

Searching for the foundations of ethics and morality

3. Better Decisions

Why moral actions are important? What determines that an action is right or wrong?

4. Better Personal Principles

Are there some objective moral principles or does it all depends on who invents or believes in them?

5. Freedom for Happiness

What kind of freedom lead us to happier lives?

6. How to Be Better Persons?

What is the ultimate goal of morality - to do good or to become good?

Module 2. Becoming Persons

Dates: 24 February, 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 March 2015

1. Personally Wounded

An insight into the human dark side

2. Personal Discernment

Decision making is an art, not merely a process

3. Fairer Persons

What does it mean to be fair to others?

4. Personal Strength

We need to face our personal demons and fears

5. Better Desires

Educating our cravings and desires is part of our personal growth

6. Fully Personal

What does it mean to have a life filled with meaning and fulfilment?

Module 3. Christian Morality Today

Dates: 28 April, 5, 12, 19, 26 May, 2 June 2015

1. Ethics and Religion

Does ethics need religion? What is the contribution of religion to ethics?

2. Christian Ethics

What is the contribution of Christianity to ethics?

3. Christian Faith and Christian Hope

What does it mean to believe in God?

How is human hope different from Christian Hope?

4. Christian love

On human love and Christian love

5. Empowered and gifted

God's spiritual contribution

6. Fruitful and Blessed

God's contribution to human meaning and fulfilment

Module 4. Ethics of Love, Sex and Marriage

Dates: 14, 21, 28 July; 4, 11, 18 August 2015

1. Today's cultural perception of sex and love

Understanding the roots of the perception of sex and love today

2. Philosophy of the Body

Corrections to today's cultural perceptions of love and sex

3. Ethics of Impersonal and Personal Sex

Morality of acts of impersonal sex: pornography, casual sex, etc.

Morality of sexual acts within a personal relationship: premarital sex

4. Marital Life, love and sex

The life of marriage implies a respectful sexual relationship.

Morality of contraception, adultery and divorce.

5. Same Sex Issues

Are same-sex unions equivalent to marriage? Homosexual acts and persons with SSA.

6. God in Marriage

Does Christian faith make any difference in the marital relationship?

Module 5. Bioethics: Stewards For Life
Dates: 1, 8, 15, 29 September; 6 and 13 October 2015

- 1. The Dignity of the Human Person**
The person, the human body, the embryo
- 2. Can We Reproduce Procreation?**
The ethics of assisted reproductive technologies
- 3. Ethics in the Beginning of Life**
Stem cells, cloning, genetic engineering, human embryos, prenatal testing
- 4. Stewards of the Human Body:**
Research on humans, consent, organ donation, modifying the body, plastic surgery
- 5. Ethical Decisions at the End of Life**
PVS, comatose patients, euthanasia, AMD, care for the dying, defining death
- 6. Stewards, not Masters**
A fundamental difference in bioethics

Module 6. Ethics of Social Justice and the Environment
Dates: 20, 27 October; 3, 17, 24 November and 1 December 2015

- 1. The Person in Society**
Human rights and the common good
- 2. Work**
Contributing to the common good and self-fulfilment
- 3. Economics**
Fair distribution within society
- 4. Engaging with Society**
Solidarity, participation, subsidiarity, charity
- 5. Politics**
Right leadership for society
- 6. One World for All**
The global family, peace and the environment

H. Course Contribution

The contribution for each module is \$60.00.

Cheque payment is to be made payable to '**Caritas - Personal Moral Compass**'.

The cheque and completed registration form should be mailed to:

Personal Moral Compass Course Administrator
Caritas Singapore
55 Waterloo Street
Catholic Centre
#08-01
Singapore 187954

Cash payment could also be made at the Caritas Singapore's office during office hours.

For more information, participants could email to Gail Ng at formation@caritas-singapore.org. or contact her at 63389453 (DID).