

# In Search of the Good



## Unit 1: Mapping the Ethical Experience

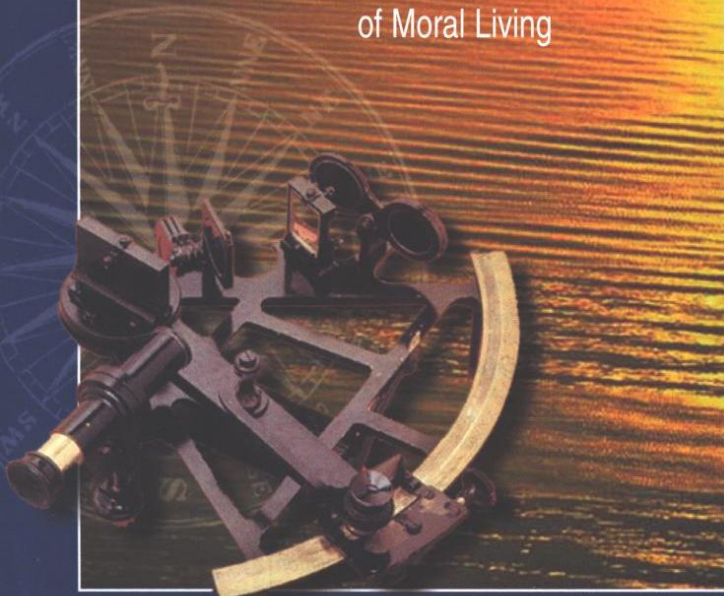
### Chapter 1: Why be ethical?

# The Cover

A Summer 2004 Release  
Grade 12 religious education program

## In Search of the Good

A Catholic Understanding  
of Moral Living



National Office of Religious Education (NORE)  
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB)

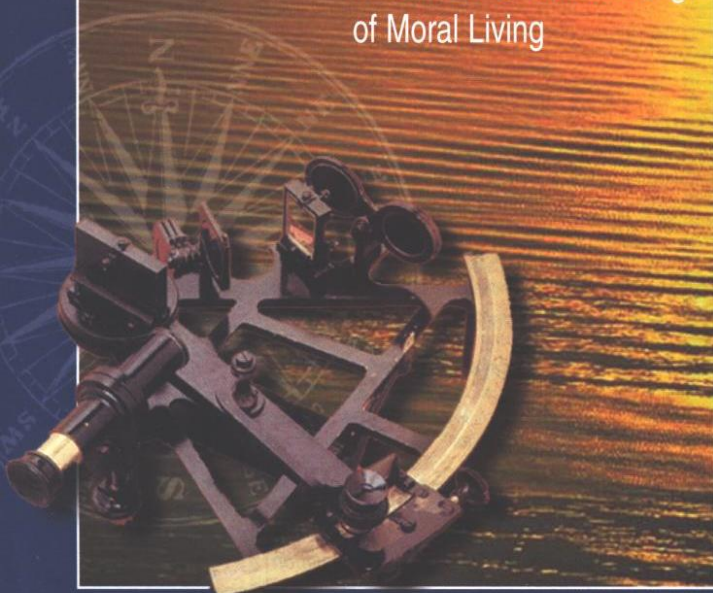
- What is the instrument on the cover called?
  - sextant
- What is it used for?
  - navigation for sailors
- Why is it on the cover of a text in ethics and moral living?
  - Our times may seem more fluid than solid.

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A Catholic Understanding  
of Moral Living



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- Where we are going may not always seem obvious, but we must navigate or be at the mercy of winds and currents, trends and popular opinions.
- There are solid reference points to help us navigate – sun, stars, horizon.
- This course will look at the solid reference points to navigate through life

# *Ethics & Morality*



# *What ethical issues do these songs present?*

- **SUZANNE VEGA LYRICS**

**"Luka"**

My name is Luka  
I live on the second floor  
I live upstairs from you  
Yes I think you've seen me before

If you hear something late at night  
Some kind of trouble. some kind of fight  
Just don't ask me what it was  
Just don't ask me what it was  
Just don't ask me what it was

- I think it's because I'm clumsy  
I try not to talk too loud  
Maybe it's because I'm crazy  
I try not to act too proud

They only hit until you cry  
And after that you don't ask why  
You just don't argue anymore  
You just don't argue anymore  
You just don't argue anymore

Yes I think I'm okay  
I walked into the door again  
Well, if you ask that's what I'll say  
And it's not your business anyway  
I guess I'd like to be alone  
With nothing broken, nothing thrown

Just don't ask me how I am [X3]



# *What ethical issues do these songs present?*

## **Another Day In Paradise**

By Phil Collins

- She calls out to the man on the street  
'sir, can you help me?  
It's cold and I've nowhere to sleep,  
Is there somewhere you can tell me? '

He walks on, doesn't look back  
He pretends he can't hear her  
Starts to whistle as he crosses the street  
Seems embarrassed to be there

Oh think twice, it's another day for  
You and me in paradise  
Oh think twice, it's just another day for you,  
You and me in paradise

➤ She calls out to the man on the street  
He can see she's been crying  
She's got blisters on the soles of her feet  
Can't walk but she's trying

Oh think twice...


Oh lord, is there nothing more anybody can do  
Oh lord, there must be something you can say

You can tell from the lines on her face  
You can see that she's been there  
Probably been moved on from every place  
'cos she didn't fit in there

Oh think twice...



# *FOUR WAYS OF LOCATING THE ETHICAL*



What response do these  
pictures call up in your  
mind/heart?

# Personal Response





# THE OTHER



# OBLIGATION OR DUTY



# INTOLERABLE



## ALL EXPERIENCES ARE ETHICAL

◇ The four ways of locating the ethical are through the:

- Experience of your own personal response
- Experience of the Other
- Experience of Obligation or duty
- Experience of what is intolerable

Start with a recognition of what is inside first.  
Then we find language to become more ethical and moral.

# *Ethics and Morality*

- **Ethics**

- Greek: ta ethika – having to do with good character
- Concerned with the good or values that humans pursue such as happiness or freedom
- Guides morality, gives vision

- **Morality**

- Latin: moralitas – having to do with customs, habits, and manners shaping human life
- Concerned that humans can attain the good, such as rules, laws, and commandments

# *Ethics and Morality*

- Ethics

- Ex. Like musical theory, ability to read music
- Ex. Like understanding the physics involved with a moving car (momentum, friction, forces, etc.)

- Morality

- Ex. Like actually playing music
- Ex. Like driving a car

# *Ethics and Morality*

- You can play music or drive a car without understanding the foundational knowledge behind both. However, with this foundation, you can apply your information much more broadly. For example, combining several songs into a medley or determining the cause of an accident.
- Likewise, ethics give us an understanding of the principles underlying the rules.

# *Ethics and Morality*

- Ethics have priority over morality because they give the foundation for morality (the rules). When we look at ethics, we sometimes find exceptions to moral rules.
- Ex. “Thou shall not kill” is a good rule, promoting and protecting life. However, ethics tells us that when preserving the good – life, there are exceptions like self-defense.
- The good is the final word (ethics) not the rule (morality).



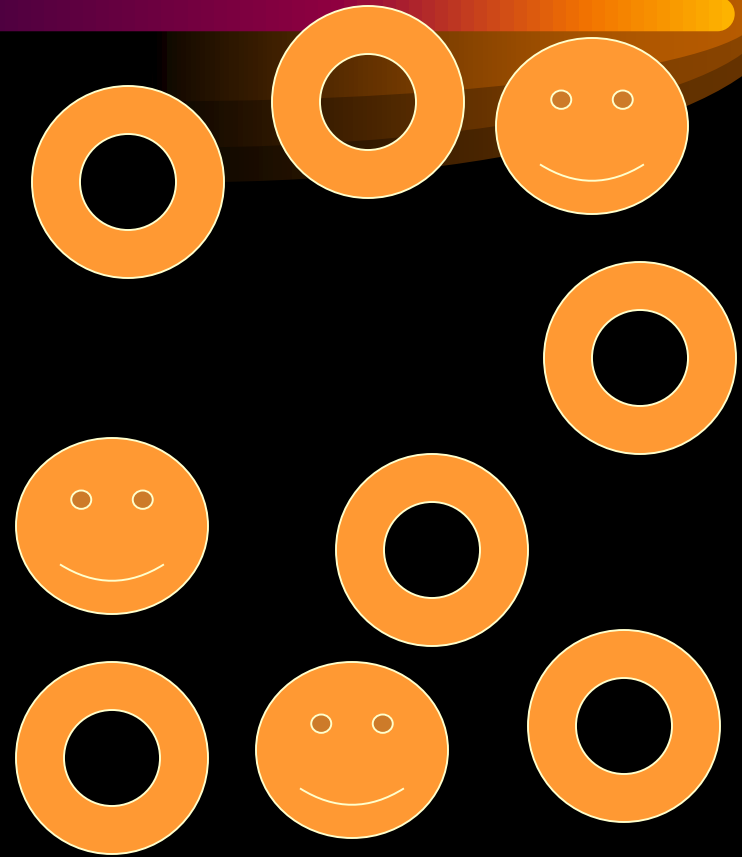


# *Three Approaches to Ethics*

Found in *The Search for the Good*

# *Three Approaches to Ethics*

- There are many approaches to ethics
- These three are chosen because they represent the three stances from which Catholic ethics has most often operated



# *Three Approaches to Ethics: :*

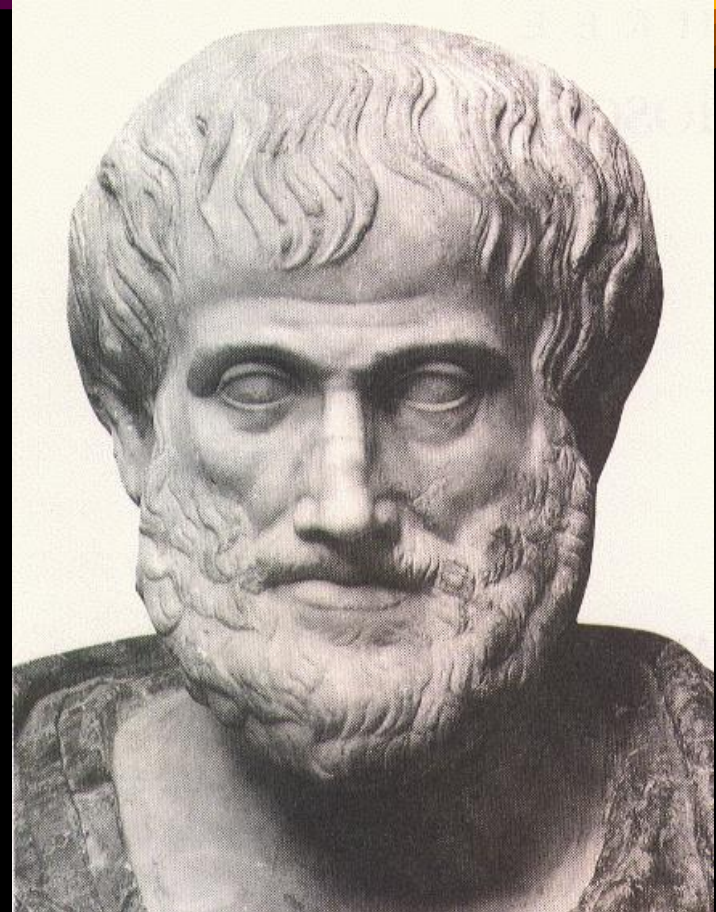
## *Teleological*

- Teleological: Having to do with the design or the purpose of something
- “Every art and every scientific inquiry, and similarly every action and purpose, may be said to aim at some good. “--Aristotle



# *Three Approaches to Ethics: : Teleological*

- Leading proponent of this approach is **Aristotle**.
- Interpreted for Christians by St Thomas Aquinas



# *Three Approaches to Ethics: : Teleological*

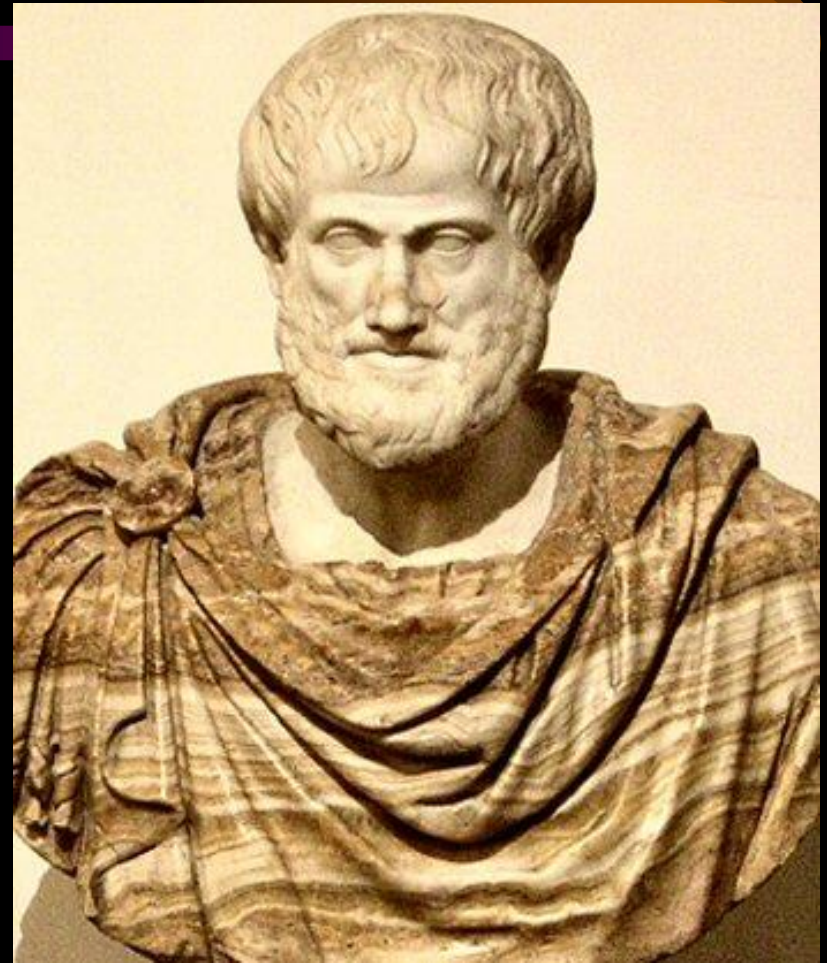
- Aristotle (384-322 BCE)
- Educated in Plato's Academy
- Explored natural world and human experience rather than ideas
- Teacher of Alexander the Great



Aristotle with Bust of Homer by Rembrandt

# *Three Approaches to Ethics: : Teleological*

- “As there are various actions, arts, and sciences, it follows that the ends are also various ...



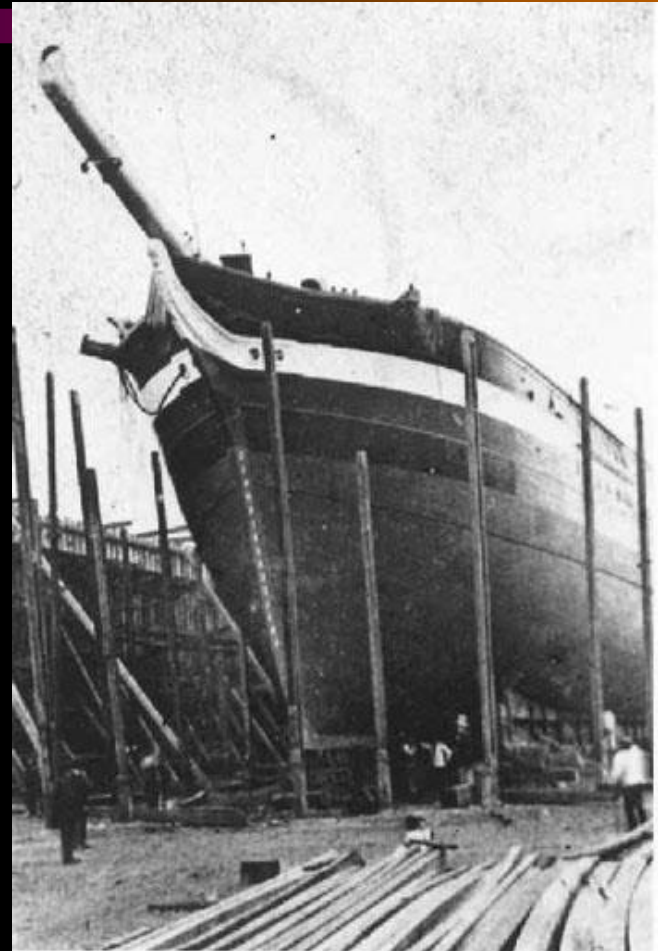
# *Three Approaches to Ethics: : Teleological*

- ...Thus health is the end of medicine



# *Three Approaches to Ethics: : Teleological*

- “...a vessel [is the purpose] of shipbuilding...”





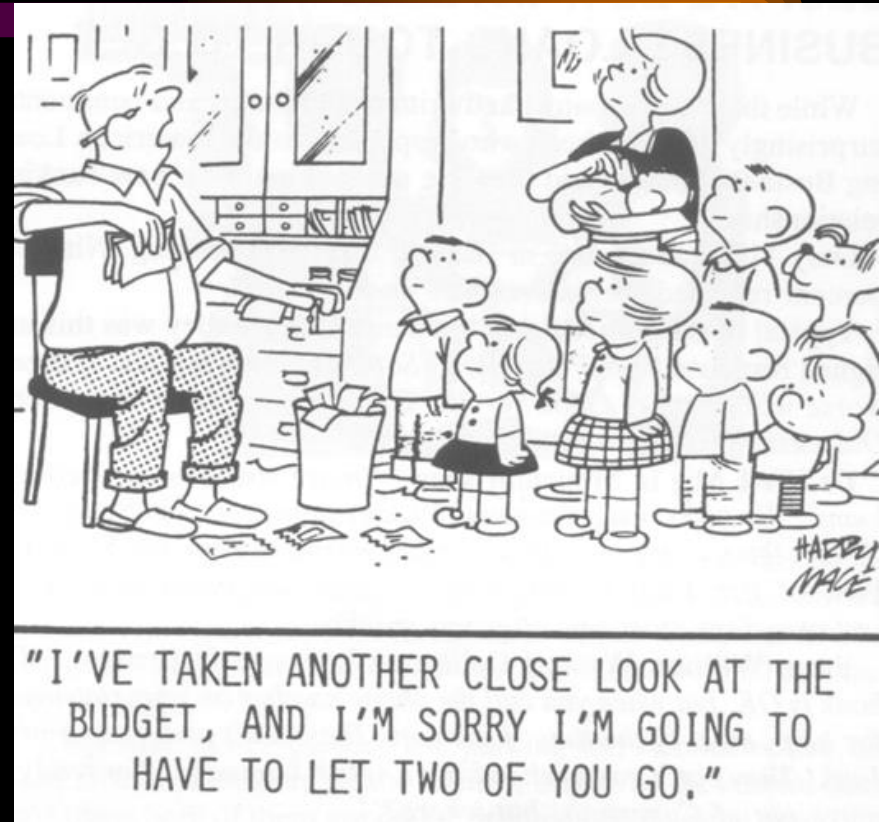
# Three Approaches to Ethics: : Teleological

- “...victory [is the goal] of strategy,...”



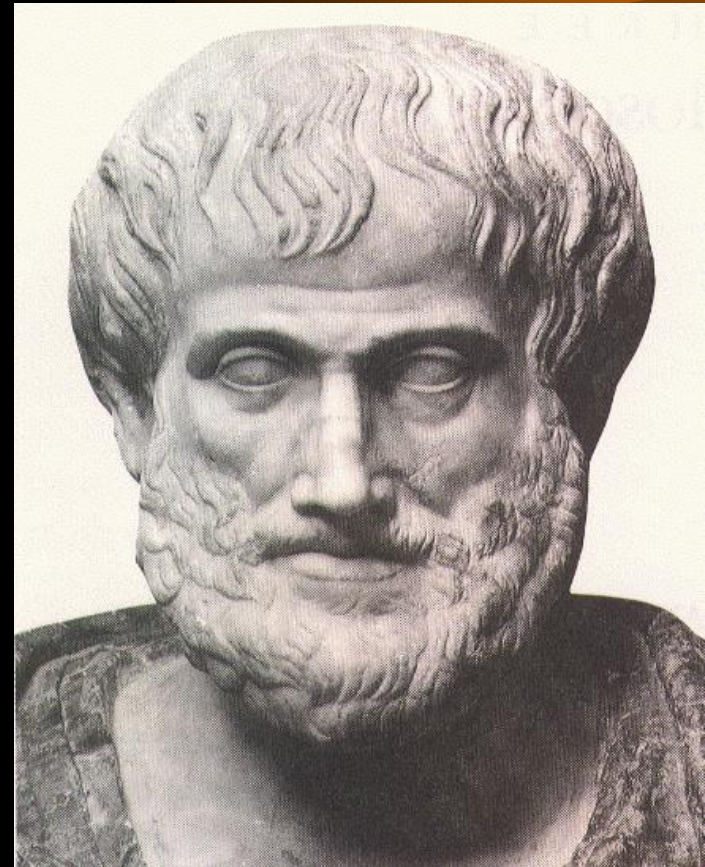
# Three Approaches to Ethics: : Teleological

- “and wealth [is the aim] of domestic economy.”



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

- “If it is true that in the sphere of action there is an end which we wish for its own sake, and for the sake of which we wish everything else ... it is clear that this will be the good or the supreme good...



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

- “...Does it not follow then that the knowledge of this supreme good is of great importance for the conduct of life, and that, *if we know it*, we shall be like archers who have a mark at which to aim, we shall have a better chance of attaining what we want?”  
– Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

- In order to obtain the good things in life we need to follow the path of rational thinking.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

- By habitually using reasoning in everyday life –not just in science –we develop our individual **character**.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

- To act ethically, therefore, is to engage our capacity to reason as we develop good character.
- That is the highest form of happiness



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

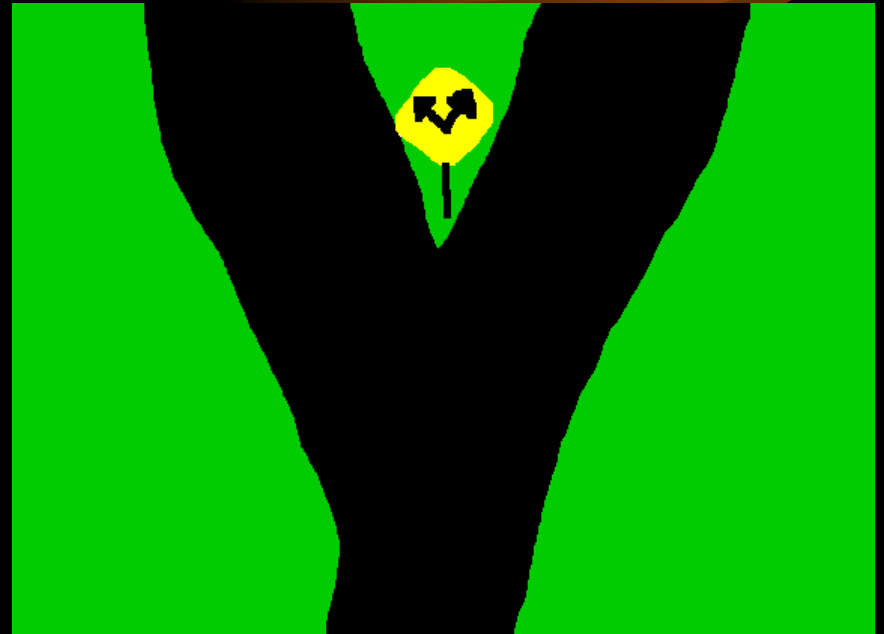
- In order to become happy we develop **habits** that represent the best of what it means to be human.
- Aristotle calls these excellences **virtues**.





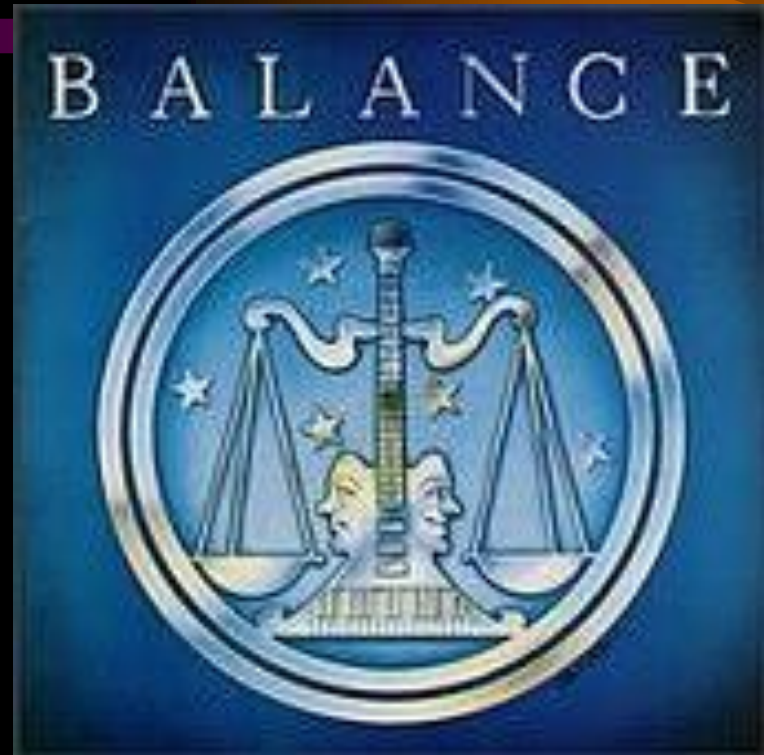
# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

- We become virtuous by choosing continually to do virtuous things, so that these actions become ingrained in us like a habit.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Teleological*

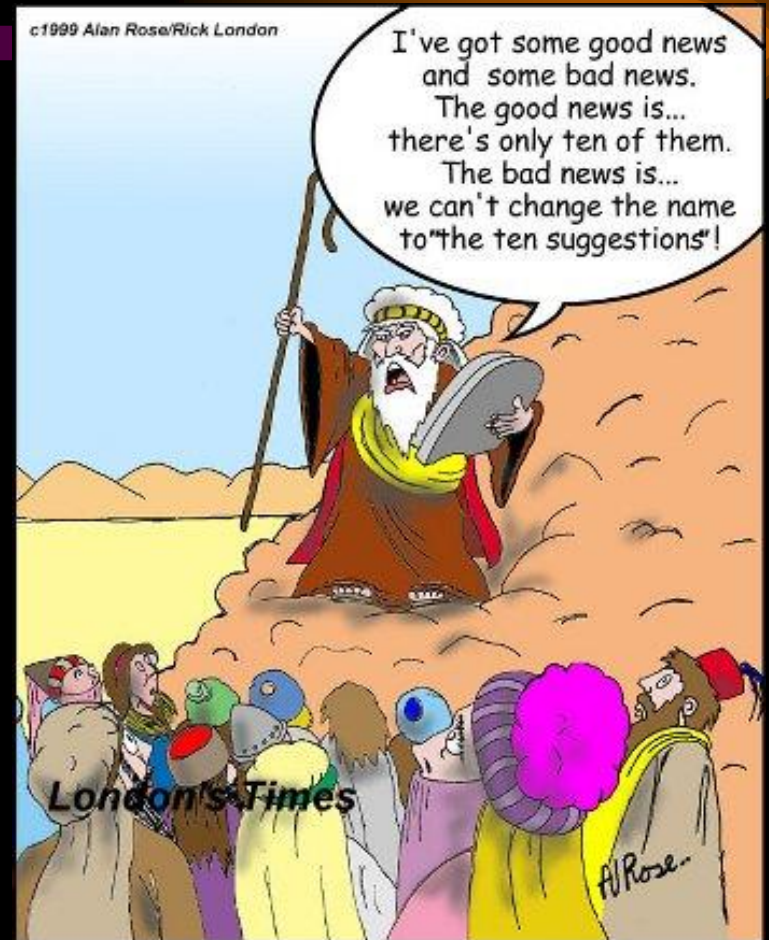
- Aristotle said that we should avoid excess and seek moderation. This is the **doctrine of the mean**



# Three Approaches to Ethics:

## Deontological

- Deontology comes from the Greek words meaning “the study of duty”



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

- Best represented by Immanuel Kant
- 1724-1804
- German



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

- Kant saw two types of ways of how we come to know things:

**Theoretical Reason**

and

**Practical Reason**



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

## **Theoretical Reason**

- How we come to know how laws of nature govern human behaviour
- Freedom of choice not an issue



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

## **Practical Reason**

- Helps us understand how people make choices
- People act on conscious choice based on principles
- Understand what we *ought* to do



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological* *Drinking and Driving*

- **Theoretical Reason** tells us the effect of alcohol consumption on the body
- **Practical Reason** tells us that we ought not to drink and drive





# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

- Kant: the good is the aim of moral life
- Concerned with moving toward practical certainty in ethics



# *Three Approaches to Ethics: Deontological*

- There are three areas of interest which we need to base our search for the supreme good:
  - God
  - Freedom
  - Immortality



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

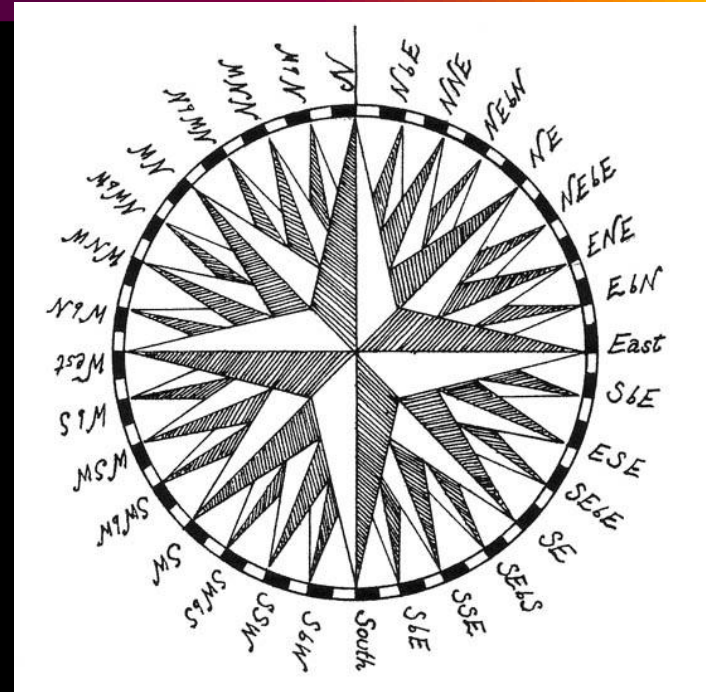
## **God**

- Because humans cannot achieve supreme good out of their own power, we need God



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

- If humans are to achieve the supreme good then they must be able to choose it



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

## **Immortality**

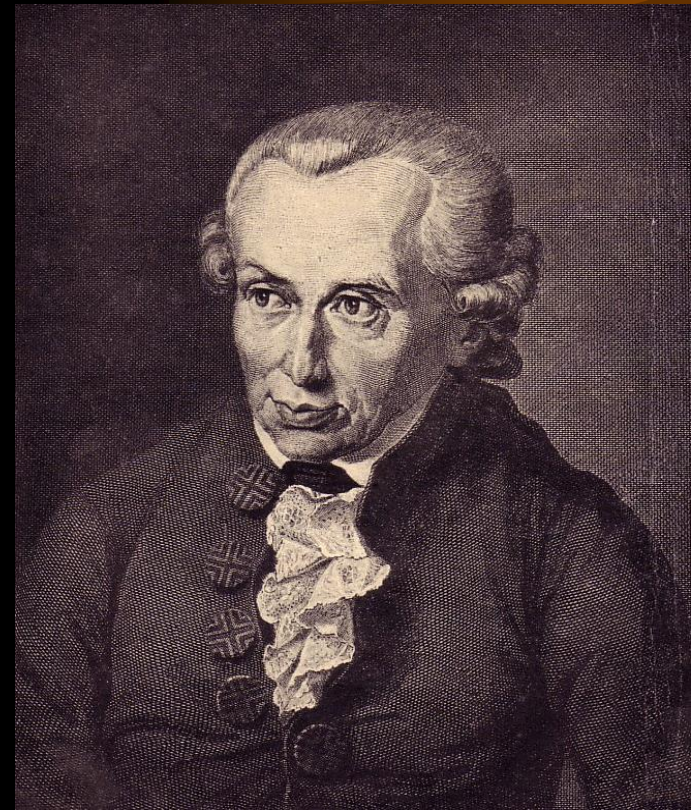
- Achieving the supreme good is an immense task, impossible to achieve in this life
- In the life beyond we can achieve the supreme good.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

## **The good will**

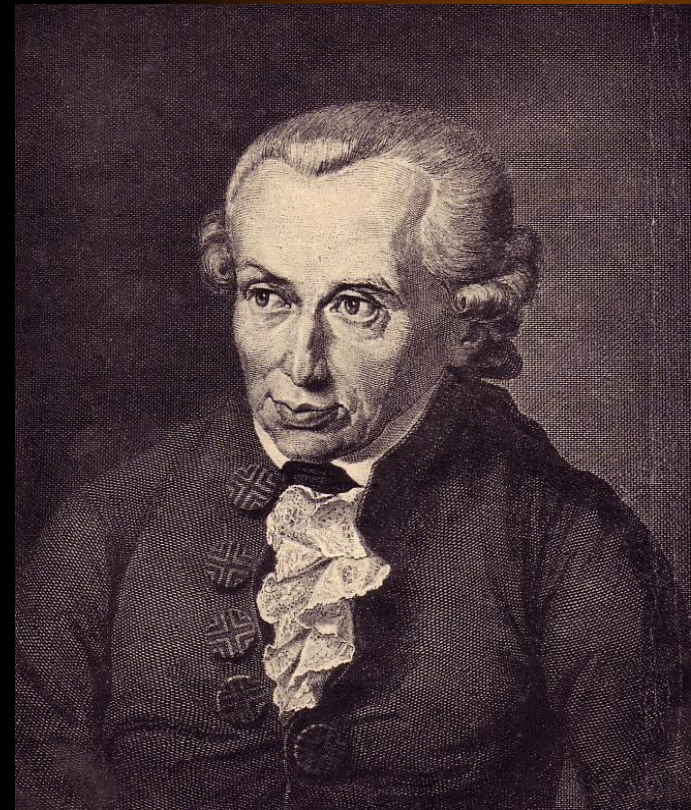
- Ethics discovered in an individual's inner convictions and autonomy
- “It is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world...which can be taken as good without qualification, except a good will.”-Kant



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

## **The good will**

- ...is the will to do our duty for no other reason than it is our duty.
- Impulses and desires draw us away from our duty.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

**Human Action is morally good when it is done for the sake of duty.**

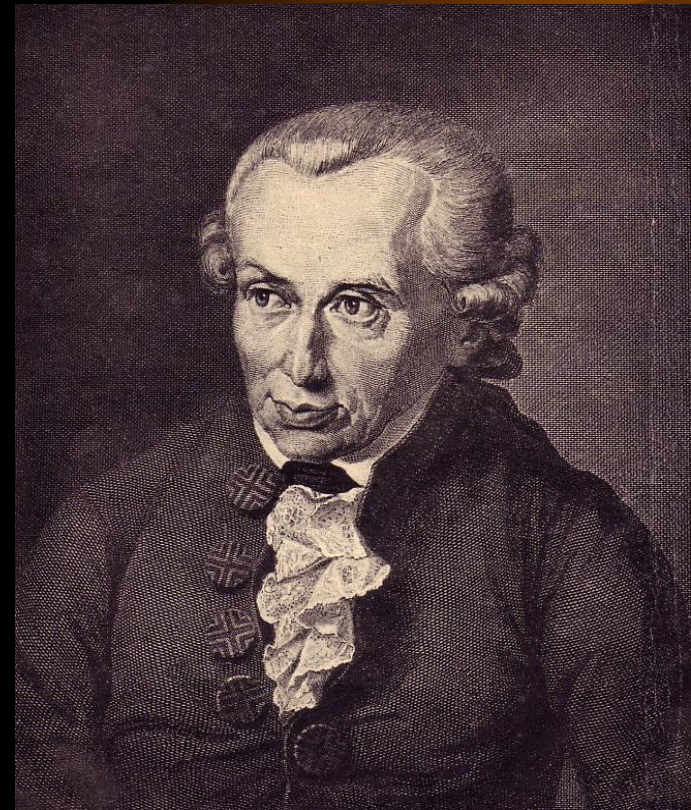




# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

**Human Action is  
morally good when it  
is done for the sake  
of duty:**

Example: You may not want  
to go to your great aunt's  
funeral, but it is your duty.  
You chose to go to honour  
your family.

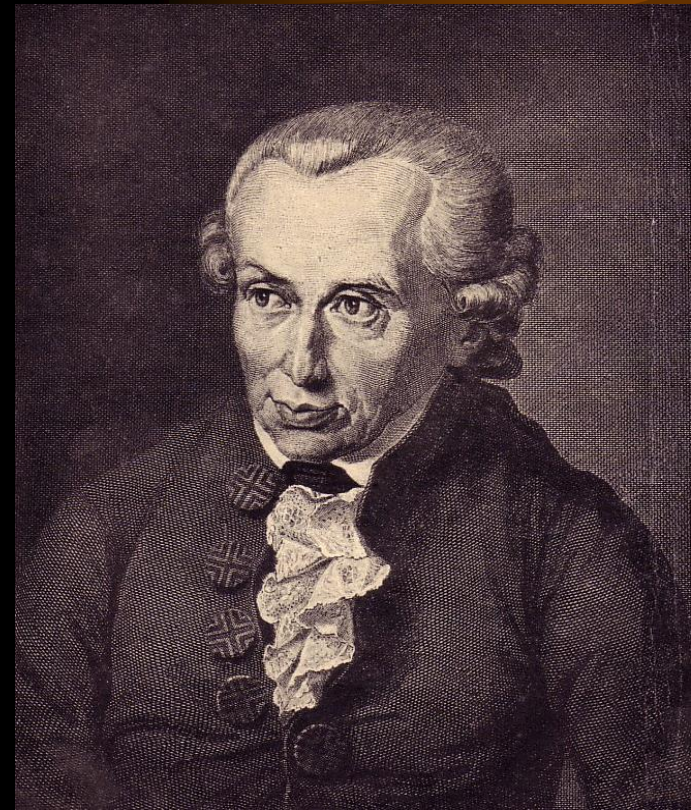


# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

**Human Action is  
morally good when it  
is done for the sake  
of duty:**

Therefore: Moral worth is  
not measured by our  
inclinations but by the  
motive behind them

It is not a language of desires  
but of “ought.”



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

## **Maxims**

- Duty is determined by the principles (maxims) according to which we act
- An ethical maxim is one in which every ethical person would necessarily act if reason were fully in charge of his or her actions.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics: Deontological*

## **Maxims**

- Kant's most famous maxim:

*I should act in a way that  
I would want everyone  
else in the world to  
act.*



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Deontological*

## **Another maxim:**

*“Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end.”*



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **Emmanuel Levinas** **(1905-1995)**

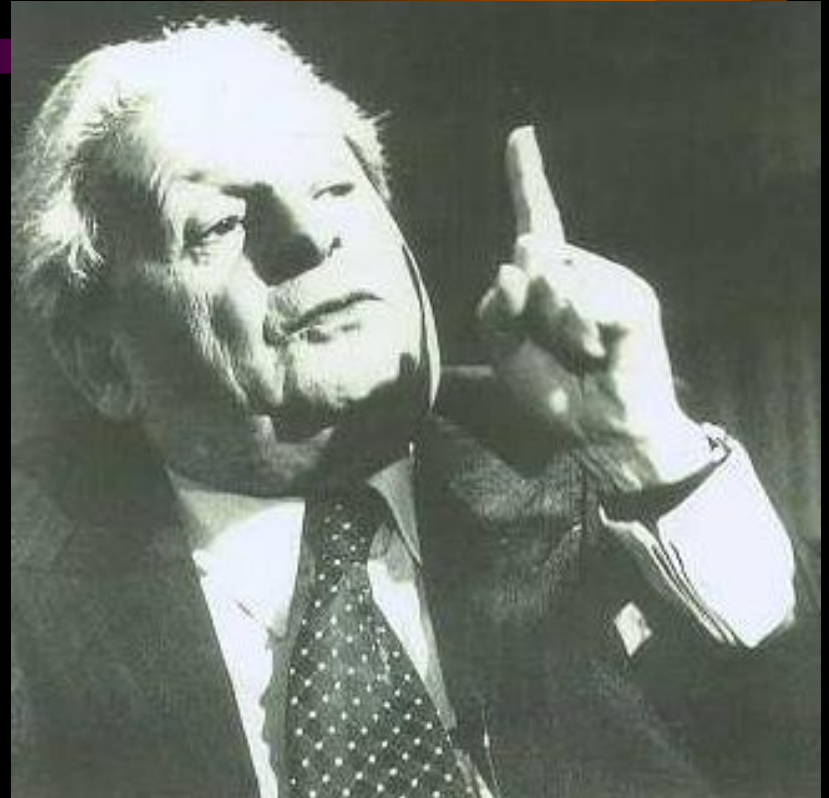
- Representative philosopher of relational ethics
- Jewish
- Born in Lithuania
- At 17 moved to France
- Lost much of his family in the Holocaust



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **Emmanuel Levinas** **(1905-1995)**

- Perceived a contrast between Jewish beliefs and Western philosophy
- Objected to Western philosophical tendency to see being as a unity and differences as not essential



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **Emmanuel Levinas (1905-1995)**

- Much respected by Pope John Paul II
- Used similar ideas in *The New Millennium*
- Pope invited Levinas to several summer conferences





# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

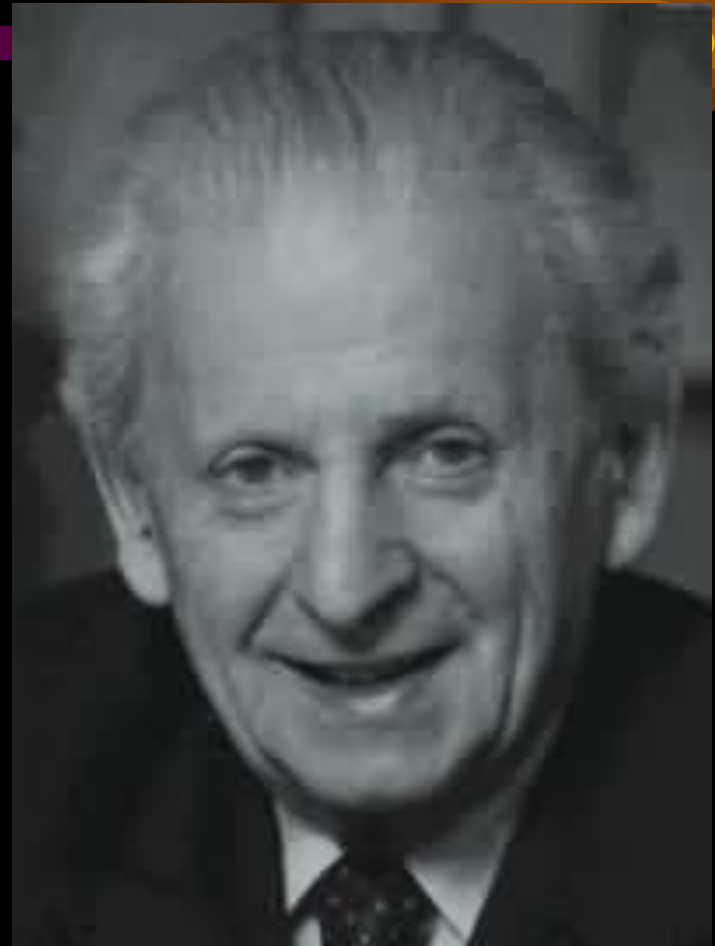
## **The Good is Infinite**

- The search for the Good is the central question of philosophy for Levinas. This is the search for God.
- Individuals are unique and this uniqueness is the interest of the Good



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

- These unique things are traces of God
- We do not encounter God directly, but rather the trace of God.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **The Trace of Good**

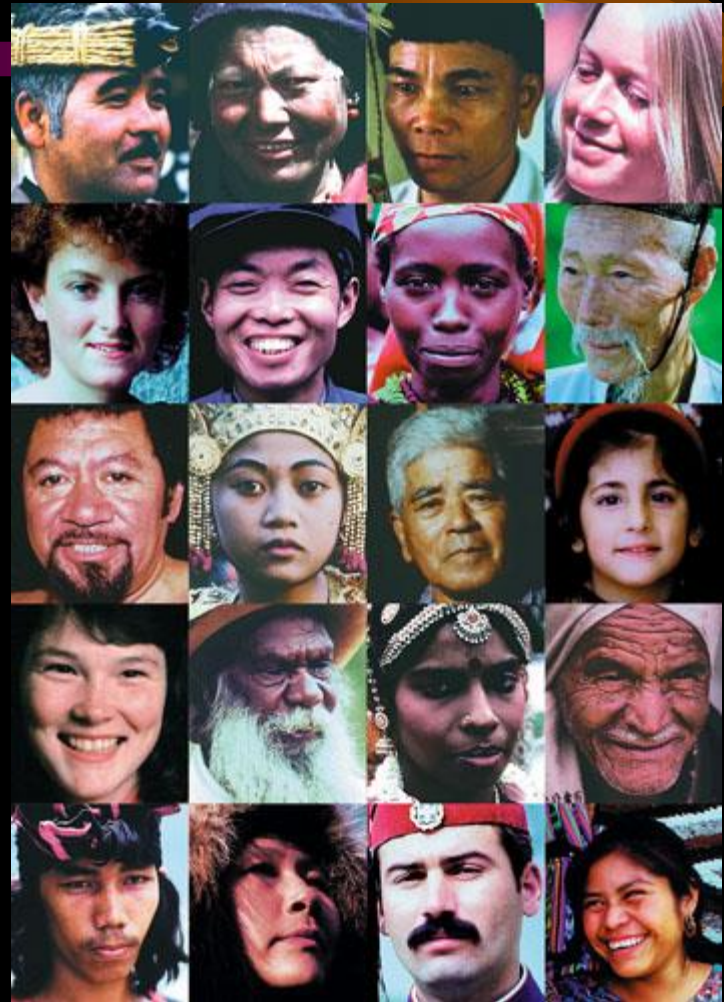
- In this picture, God is like the sun. We see traces of the sun in the picture.
- But we only see a glimpse of the grandeur
- The sun is beyond the point of vision
- God is always a step ahead of us



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **The Face as Trace of God**

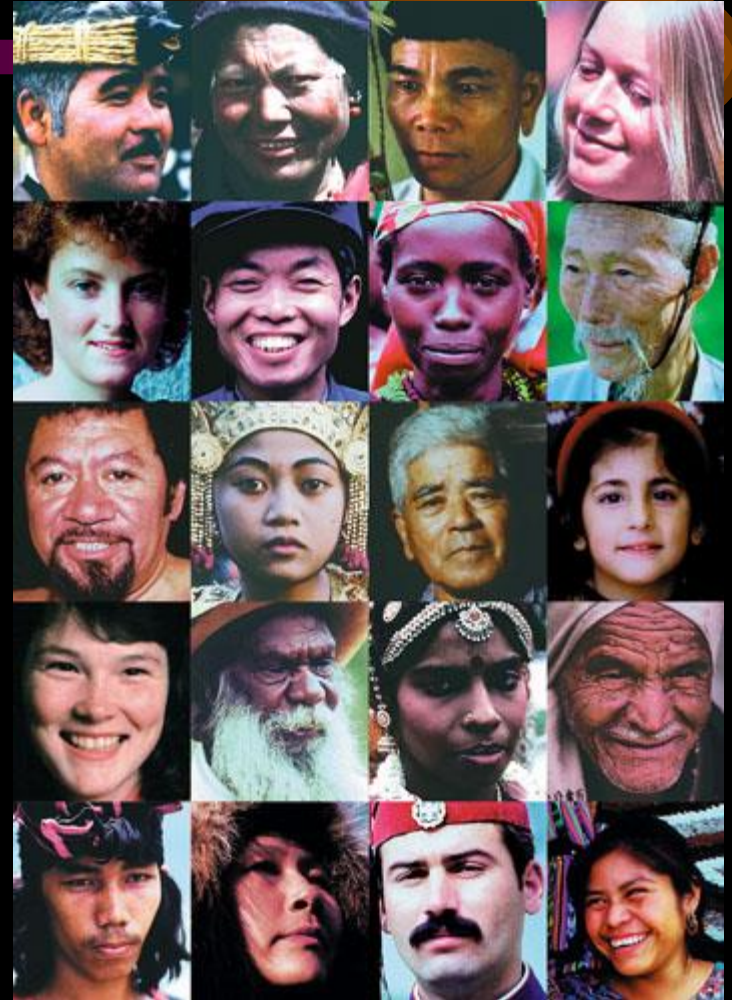
- The human face reveals the encounter with God, particularly the eyes
- A deep encounter with another person reveals a trace of God.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **The Face as Trace of God**

- When you encounter the other in this way, you cannot escape his or her uniqueness
- The face has an authority because it is a trace of the divinity.



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **The Face as Ethical**

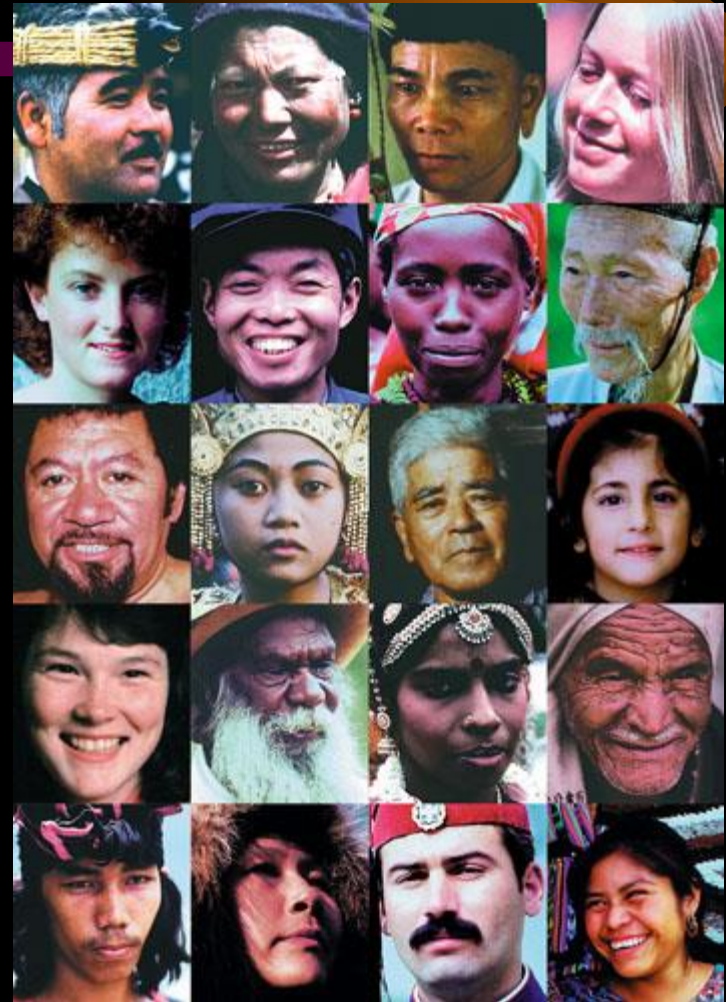
- The encountered other is the stranger whom the scriptures tell us to love.
- When I encounter suffering in the face of the other I am bound to act.
- That face arouses the goodness within



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **The Face as Ethical**

- The face suggests that there is another order of existence...the order of an incredible good calling us to be responsible for the other
- Here the self-centred self is called into question.
- Here the other rules



# *Three Approaches to Ethics:* *Relational*

## **The Face as Ethical**

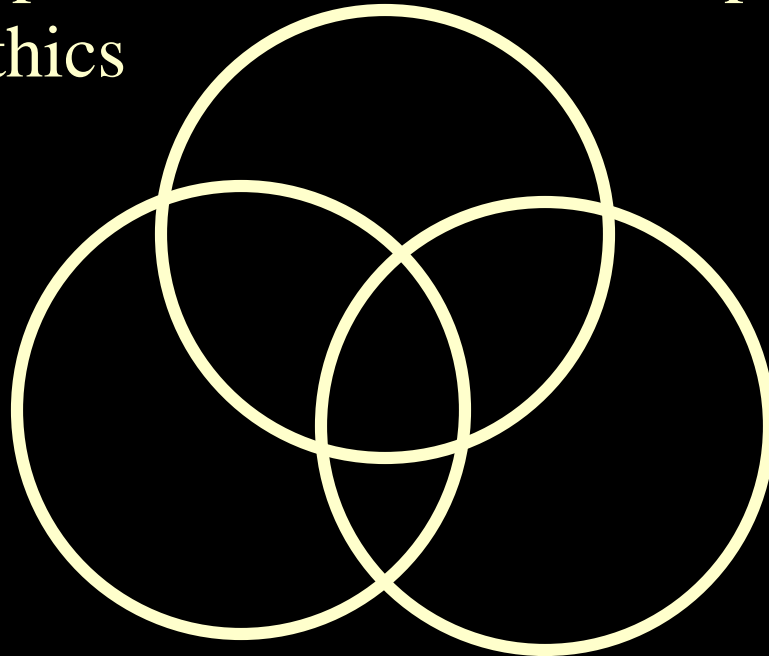
- The face makes us responsible
- The Search for the Good leads to our neighbour
- God touches us through the face of the Other





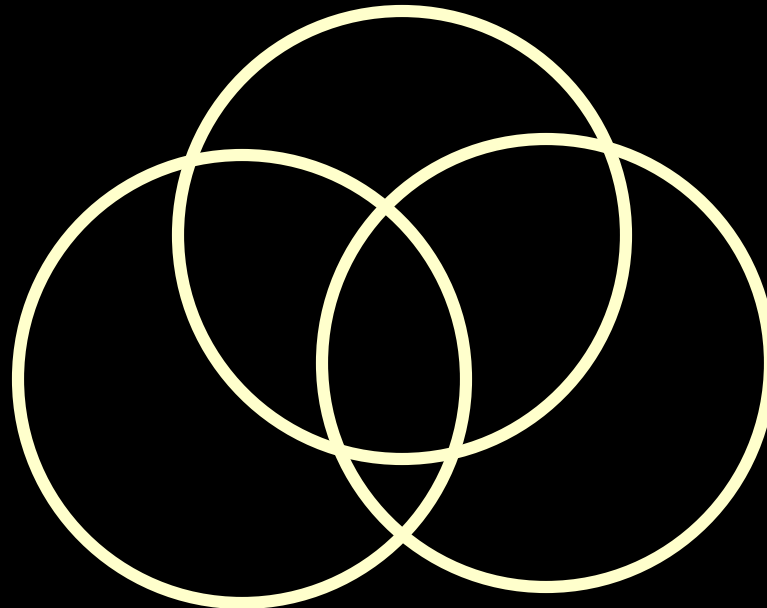
# *Three Approaches to Ethics: Relational: Similarities*

- People are fundamentally ethical
- All three ethical stances search for the Good
- All three approaches touch on an aspect of Christian ethics



# *Three Approaches to Ethics: Relational: Distinguishing Features*

- Teleological: Purpose Driven
- Deontological: Duty Driven
- Relational: Relationship Driven



*Ethical theorists: A comparison of  
main ideas*



# *Ethical theorists: A comparison of main ideas*

## Aristotle

1. Humans find happiness withn community

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## Kant

1. Ethics is a matter of one's inner conviction and autonomy

# *Ethical theorists: A comparison of main ideas*

<b>Aristotle</b>	<b>Kant</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="164 542 666 685">1. Humans find happiness within community</li><li data-bbox="164 706 666 792">2. To be happy is to live well and to do well</li><li data-bbox="164 813 666 906">3. Human activity aims at achieving the good</li><li data-bbox="164 928 666 1220">4. Since the highest capacity of humans is to be rational, the highest form of happiness is based on rational behaviour</li><li data-bbox="164 1242 666 1335">5. Be moderate in all things</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="710 542 1217 685">1. Ethics is a matter of one's inner conviction and autonomy</li><li data-bbox="710 706 1217 899">2. A human act is morally good when it is done for the sake of duty</li></ol>

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## Levinas

1. The central question in philosophy is: where is the Good?

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2. Each thing or person is a unique expression of the Good

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1. The central question in philosophy is: where is the Good?
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