

Part Three titled “The Mission” speaks of St. Joseph’s completion of his purpose on earth. He was able to perfectly finish his mission to serve both Jesus and Mary in all the remaining days of his life. The chapter highlights on the hope, work, family, Jesus, Mary, and the presence of evil.

Hope. As a just man, St. Joseph had the hope like that of Abraham who received abundant blessings from God. St. Joseph is our model of someone who hopes with God and was able to bear witness the fulfilment of His promises.

Work was St. Joseph’s daily expression of how responsible he is as a father in their simple life in Nazareth. It is a means for each one of us to discover that indeed we are already fulfilling our mission by providing towards our loved ones and ensuring a fruitful life ahead of them.

The Family reflects God’s love for His people and Christ’s love for His Church. St. Joseph was able to build a home for his family. It is a place build with love and centered on their faith in God’s overflowing mercy and love.

Jesus, the son St. Joseph protected at all costs. Mostly, we recognize St. Joseph as “foster father” but “chosen father” is much more accurate. Because like Mary, St. Joseph was also chosen by God to be the model and protector of His only begotten Son.

Mary and Joseph are perfect examples of what it takes to grow in personal holiness and how to strengthen their marriage bond. Both reveal the two greatest vocation stories of all time.

St. Joseph is also known as the “Terror of Demons.” Simply because of the Church recognizing his responsibility in protecting Jesus (the founder of the Church) from forces that would attempt to destroy Him.

The pages of the book will enable the reader to become closer to the saint that is not as popular as the rest but have left a big mark in the history of the Church. St. Joseph’s role may be very simple, but it is important to note that without him, we will not be able to experience the grand plan of salvation of man. He is chosen by God the Father to play a crucial role in the Salvation History. And true enough, he fulfilled the role wholeheartedly, trusting in the entire process and accepting it without questioning. Thus, it is but fitting to remember him and pray for him as a sign of our gratitude and honor. It is also best to pray to him, in decision-making especially if you are given the role of a father, a worker, a son, and most especially if you feel that demons are there hovering to test your faith.

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**Siefert, Josef Maria. *The Splendor of the Good and Intrinsically Evil Acts: The Cornerstone of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II’s (1920-2020) Ethics and Moral Teachings: A Philosophical Defense*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Spain: International Academy of Philosophy Press, 2021. pp. 269. ISBN: 979-873-262-0863.**

Josef Maria Seifert, the personalist philosopher who is a close collaborator and friend of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, dedicated this book to defend the thoughts of Karol Wojtyla/

John Paul II not only against the misconceptions such as the understanding of *intrinsece malum* but also against false and erroneous solutions proposed by moral theologians such as situationalist ethics and purely teleological ethics. As the book's subtitle suggests, this work is a "philosophical defense" because Seifert explicitly asserted that erroneous moral theology springs from a flawed metaphysical understanding of the human person.

This book is timely as the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Veritatis Splendor* (August 6, 1993) is being celebrated this year. In this book, Seifert honored the encyclical by means of looking for fresh insights that he can offer first, by revisiting the main arguments of *Veritatis Splendor* and second, by responding to its critics. This is important mainly because, in the present, many societies are confronted by ideologies such as the challenge posed by those who support abortion, contraception, and same-sex marriage to name a few. At the same time, this is a hypothetical response to the *dubia* of the four Cardinals Raymond Leo Burke, Carlo Caffara, Joachim Meisner, and Walter Brandmüller regarding some points in *Amoris Laetitia*, because they did not receive any reply from Pope Francis. To be fair, Seifert offered paragraphs 206-211 from *Fratelli Tutti* as consistent with John Paul II's teaching that (1) there are intrinsically evil acts and that (2) relativism can never be accepted in all spheres of morality.

Seifert also presented the *Veritatis Splendor* of John Paul II unorthodoxly without losing its orthodoxy. For example, Seifert pointed out the danger of reading Aquinas's concept of *happiness* to the extent that self-servingly loving God only for the sake of his own happiness, not for God's own sake. (p.44) He also contends that the fundamentally morally good act—which is being denied or challenged by the detractors of *intrinsece malum*—is affirmed not only by John Paul II, but by cultures and religions around the globe even before John Paul II, like the Jews, the Muslims, and even Lao-Tse. (p. 47) Seifert even warns that other scholars may argue against *intrinsece malum* under the guise of personalism. Still, in reality, they are clearly denying the foundation of *personalist ethics*: that there is an absolute moral evil that must be rejected *unconditionally*. (pp.72-73) Otherwise, it will lead to utilitarianism and Manicheanism.

To prove the relevance of *Veritatis Splendor* even up to this point in time, Seifert was able to come up with his philosophically contextualized version of *ressourcement* when he emphasized that even before Wojtyła/John Paul II, Socrates already affirmed that there is a universally moral good and evil which leads to the truth about natural law. For this, Seifert called John Paul II the Socrates among the Popes. Seifert also made in this work a kind of *aggiornamento* by including Max Horkheimer in the dialogue, who said that "the pill [contraceptive medicine] is the death of love because a modern Julia would tell her Romeo that he should wait because she first had to take the pill before coming to him" (pp.113-114) which is a clear rejection of contraception. This statement, although not intended by Horkheimer to support John Paul II, affirms the call of the latter in the *Veritatis Splendor*. These are only a few examples of intriguing assertions that Seifert made in the book.

The dense character of the book is intentional because its audience is expected to be in the intermediate to advance in terms of knowing the presuppositions and basic arguments of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. It is intellectually demanding because it touches on metaphysical terrain— where Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II grounded his anthropology and moral philosophy—in dialogue with moral theology. The book furthers the study of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral teaching by placing it in conversation with the problems of the past and the new challenges of the present.

This volume is invaluable for scholars of Wojtyła, particularly those interested in his moral philosophy and bioethics. Seifert successfully demonstrates that if one follows Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, it is never acceptable to separate the fundamental moral options with outward-directed actions. If this divide is maintained, the result will likely echo the errors of both Manicheism and utilitarianism, as seen in the practices of proponents of both consequentialist and purely teleological ethics, particularly within medical practices (pp. 179-194).

While future readers might initially find the depth of the book daunting, they will ultimately find it rewarding due to its practical implications for addressing contemporary moral issues. In this book, Seifert synthesizes the philosophies of thinkers like Dietrich von Hildebrand and Josef Pieper with the thoughts of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, concurrently offering a critical response to the work of scholars such as Josef Fuchs, Jonathan Harrison, and Franz Böckle. This positions the reader for a more profound engagement with the primary texts written by Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II.

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**Manlangit, Jerry Reb. MHA, Ph.D. *Fundamental Concepts, Principles, and Issues in BIOETHICS*. Rev. Ed. 2020. pp. 629. ISBN-13:979-868-039-900-2.**

In all candor, in this book, “Fundamental Concepts, Principles, and Issues in Bioethics,” the author Fr. Manlangit, worked for the advocacy of the dignity reposed in the great mystery and gift of human life. This is therefore a humble tribute to human life and its nobility. “Greater love no man has than to lay his life for his friends,” (*Jn. 15:13*) is a quote from the Sacred Scriptures that ushers an opening salvo to warn readers that it is not just any secular book but is anchored primarily on faith and morals.

In the extant discussions in the book, the author has masterfully delivered its promise of tackling the core and essential concepts, principles, and issues in Bioethics spread throughout its 629 pages of well-researched, extensively discoursed, and impactful discussion. There is no better way to explain the invaluable contribution of this book to readers from various fields and disciplines, than by quoting pertinent portions of its foreword and acknowledgments. As very succinctly put by the author, “the readers will find useful the rich and intelligent discussions of bioethical concepts, principles, and perennial and current issues and dilemmas that usually confront health practitioners in educational, health and research works.”

Further, as the author accurately predicted, “those who encounter problems in these works on a daily basis will find many enlightening and clarifying insightful views proffered, together with the rich case studies well illustrated herein and which are considered to be paramount in making ethical decisions in health care.”

Presentation-wise, the book was well organized, and the discussions were concise but complete. The topics were relevantly segregated, but, when necessary, were effortlessly harmonized with each other. Each chapter starts with a quotation from the Sacred Scriptures as the author carefully selected to “add a spiritual dimension to a highly rational discussion.”