

CURRENT EVENTS

The Principle of Totality

Human beings were originally created in the Image of God. That is what makes us different from rocks, plants, and cats. While Christ died to make all things right, there is a special place for humanity in the created context of God – we are stewards of Creation.

And so, we must reject the idea that mankind was a brute caveman without language, grunting with animalistic intentions. In other words, every individual human person is important, precious, sacred, and one whom Christ died for. Every human person – no matter how unintelligent, sick, weak, or even evil – is not some useless organism that can be easily discarded for the sake of the greater good.

Now, with regard to the Principle of Totality, it is important to understand that each individual person is the end, the whole, and the total. Conversely, the state, the collective society, or a group of people is not the end, the whole, or the total. Furthermore, when we speak as the human person as the end, the whole, and the total, we are not referring just to the person as a physical organism but the whole person – body, soul, emotions, and mind.

What are the applications of this Principle of Totality, practically speaking? Consider the following examples:

- 1) A person may sacrifice a part of their body to serve the greater whole of their human body. *(Example: removing wisdom teeth to help the jaw and reduce headaches, removing a bad toe to improve mobility, removing an appendix, etc.)*
- 2) A person may sacrifice a part of their body to serve another person's body as long as it does not damage the greater whole of the donor's body.

(Example: donating blood and a kidney (i.e., parts) does not hurt the whole of the donor.)

- 2) A person may not sacrifice a part of their body to serve another person's body, if the sacrifice would damage themselves as a whole person.

(Example: a father can't give his heart to his son, for this would result in the father's death.)

- 3) A society/state can request citizens to make sacrifices *(as acts of charity)* for the collective good of society while respecting the citizens' right to judge whether such sacrifices would harm them as a whole person. *(Example: the state may encourage citizens to use birth control for population control. However, the state cannot universally force a pill, for such actions may harm certain citizen's health as a whole being.)*

- 4) A society/state abuses the Principle of Totality when it treats citizens as 'parts' and not 'wholes.' The reason being, anything can be justified if mankind is reduced to a 'part' and the society/state is treated as the 'whole.' History has shown us that when mankind loses its 'wholeness' and is reduced to a 'part,' that society/state have a tendency to treat certain parts ruthlessly for the sake of the supposed overall whole of society.

Conclusion: A society must always uphold the human person as the end, whole, and total. And so, if the human person is the end, a society/state must give the right to the individual to make sacrifices based upon their own context of their medical history, medications, allergies, emotional health, etc. One size cannot fit all, especially when the person – not the society/state – is considered the whole.

GENERAL DEFINITION:

Since parts are ordered for the good of the whole, they may be disposed of, if necessary, for the good of the whole.

TAUGHT BY:

- Scripture (See: the Doctrine of Creation in Genesis 1-2; Psalm 139:13; Matthew 6:26; 1 Corinthians 6:19; etc.)
- Aristotle (384 BC)
- Thomas Aquinas (1225 AD)
- Richard Eyer (2000 CPH)

APPLICATION TO THE HUMAN BODY:

An individual may not dispose of his organs or destroy their capacity to function, except to the extent that this is necessary for the general well-being of the whole body.

LIMITATIONS:

It is essential to define what is a 'part' and what is the 'whole.' For example, a kidney, finger, or an eyeball is not a finality in itself but is intended to serve the whole person. And so, the Principle of Totality (medically speaking) cannot be applied collectively to the State, City, or Society of People. For example, performing compulsory sterilization on a part of society or aborting down syndrome babies in the womb as parts of society - on the grounds that such acts would improve the whole society - is not permissible.

