

PARISHES OF
ST PIUS X, ALDERLEY EDGE, ST BENEDICT'S, HANDFORTH
AND
SACRED HEART & ST TERESA'S WILMSLOW
WEEKLY REFLECTION

Sunday 11th January 2026 Baptism of the Lord
Universal Moral Values

This reflection attempts to identify what might be described as universal moral values.

In 2019 anthropologists at the University of Oxford (1) discovered what they believe to be seven universal moral rules: help your family, help your group, return favours, be brave, defer to superiors, divide resources fairly, and respect others' property, were found in a survey of 60 cultures from all around the world.

The research found, first, that these seven cooperative behaviours were always considered morally good. Second, examples of most of these morals were found in most societies. Crucially, there were no counter-examples – no societies in which any of these behaviours were considered morally bad. Third, these morals were observed with equal frequency across continents; they were not the exclusive preserve of 'the West' or any other region.

In 2003 Kent M Keith whilst writing "Morality and Morale: a business tale", (2) described a universal moral code as a list of fundamental moral principles which can be found throughout the world. His code incorporates basic, universal ideas about how we should live and how we should treat each other.

His code was: "DO NO HARM: do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you, do not lie, do not steal, do not cheat, do not falsely accuse others, do not commit adultery, do not commit incest, do not physically or verbally abuse others, do not murder, do not destroy the natural environment upon which all life depends.

DO GOOD: do to others what you would like them to do to you, be honest and fair, be generous, be faithful to your family and friends, take care of your children when they are young, take care of your parents when they are old, take care of those who

cannot take care of themselves, be kind to strangers, respect all life, protect the natural environment upon which all life depends.”

He concluded the universal moral code is a simple reminder of the basic moral principles that are the foundation for that meaning and happiness.

These issues are not unfamiliar to us and can be seen in the ten commandments and in other parts of the Bible but in different language. Catholic morals and values centre on the love of God and neighbour with a strong emphasis faith, hope and charity. Principles such as dignity of the human person, respect for life, the common good and care for the poor.

Ten essential moral principles in Catholic teaching are: respect for human dignity, respect for creation and the environment, love one another and ourselves, actively work to right wrongs and indignities, to hear another’s cries of anguish, feel another’s pain and respond, serve others humbly and unselfishly, (Jesus washing feet John 13:4-17), forgive one another and always seek reconciliation with one another, pursue peace and harmony in our personal life, relationships and world, develop relationships built on loyalty, trust and love that provide intimacy, security and happiness, be honest and genuine with other individuals, institutions, society and self in every act, deed and dealing

Bernard Kellett

1. Is it good to cooperate? Testing the theory of morality as cooperation in 60 societies” – Oliver Scott Curry
2. Morality and Morale- a business tale – Kent M Keith