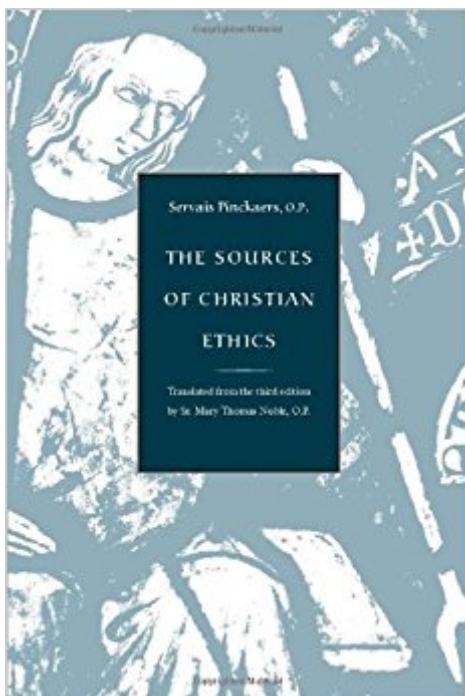


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# The Sources Of Christian Ethics, 3rd Edition



## Synopsis

First published in 1985 as *Les sources de la morale chrétienne* by University Press Fribourg, this work has been recognized by scholars worldwide as one of the most important books in the field of moral theology. Already its acclaim has warranted translations into Spanish, Italian, and Polish. Now it is available for the first time in an English translation, which includes a new preface. Writing in a tone that is reconciliatory rather than polemical, Servais Pinckaers returns Christian ethics to its sources, the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. After discussing the complementary domains of morality and the behavioral and natural sciences, he traces the scriptural themes—particularly in the Sermon on the Mount and the writings of St. Paul—that most influence moral instruction. He then examines in depth the history of moral theology from the patristic period to the present day. This history includes a discussion of the relation of Protestant and Catholic views of Christian ethics. The unique feature of Pinckaers's contemporary Thomistic view is its emphasis on the virtues, gifts, and evangelical Beatitudes as the heart of the Christian moral life. His approach to morality results in what he calls the freedom for excellence, a notion of freedom that he contrasts with the nominalist concept of the freedom of indifference, which has dominated moral theology since the fourteenth century. As a complete handbook of moral theology, this book will serve the needs of both beginning and advanced students in seminary and university courses in moral theology and ethics. For Catholic readers in particular, it will provide the background and perspective needed to achieve a fuller understanding of the moral teaching of the Catechism and of the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*. Servais Pinckaers, O.P., is professor of moral theology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. His most recent books include *L'Evangile et la Morale* (1989) and *La Morale Catholique* (1991).

"Pinckaers' wonderful book is characterized by a return to the centrality of the virtues for how one thinks about the moral life. . . ." •First Things""This work provides a succinct overview of the history of moral theology, written with a sureness of touch developed by long years of research. . . . There is no comparable single work in English which explains what moral theology is and what it is about." •Brian V. Johnstone, C.Ss.R., Alphonsian Academy, Rome "A very readable translation of Pinckaers's award-winning work in foundational ethics...." •Religious Studies Review"

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation) Original Language: French --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Recognized by scholars worldwide as one of the most important books in the field of moral theology, this book returns Christian ethics to its sources: the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A very important book - but not an easy read. This is a critical overview of Christian ethics, contrasting the modern ethics that emphasizes obligation and commandments to the ethical approach found in the Fathers of the Church and St. Thomas that started from the natural inclination to happiness, the importance of the Beatitudes, and the virtues. This book is a very good - though a little repetitive at times - analysis that opens up the way toward an ethics based first of all on the Sermon on the Mount and which is based in and fulfills our natural inclinations. The author is highly indebted to the work of St. Thomas Aquinas which is central to his understanding of ethics. This book demands effort and concentration but it is well worth it. I finished this book a day after finishing Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia*. Pinckaers helped me understand what is happening in the pope's apostolic exhortation. Most fascinating is the positive approach to sexuality that both Pickaers and Pope Francis exhibit - based, I'm guessing, on a positive reading of Thomas Aquinas on sexuality.

This is a wonderful work of Christian ethics. It recovers the classical tradition of virtue ethics, as distinct from the Kantian law-based approach or the rules and legalism of the manuals for confessors. Like classical Aristotelian and medieval- Christian ethics, it understands ethics in terms

of true human happiness rather than emphasizing obligations and the resolving of quandaries. But it does not fall into the relativistic tendencies of modern secular virtue ethics. On the contrary, it is firmly within the Thomistic tradition of moral theology and orthodox in its approach to morality. Servais distinguishes the nominalist concept of freedom, the freedom of indifference, which has dominated ethics and moral theology since shortly after Thomas's death, from a freedom for excellence rooted in the natural law and what constitutes and is required for human flourishing. Together with the shorter, more accessible *Morality: The Catholic View*, with a preface by Alasdair MacIntyre, this book makes a profoundly important contribution to moral theology in our time.

Amazing historical exposition and connection between concepts, historical errors, the moment those errors took place, why and how to recover the correct path. Totally suggest this book to any Moral Theology student of just any serious person trying to know the good ways of morality in the Christian-Catholic Tradition.

Some tough dry reading to get through in the beginning but someone advised me to read the last hundred pages first then go back and start from beginning. Excellent grasp of what is different about Christian ethics.

Fr. Pinckaers clears the muddle of the manualists, Ockhamists, and Divine Command theorists and turns back to St. Thomas, The Fathers of the Church, and the Gospel itself to find the real heart of Christian ethics. What a fantastic work.

unparalleled in this subject

A fantastic look at the history and development of the academic field of Moral Theology/Philosophy. In particular it delves into The Roman Catholic perspective; where we are, how we got there, and what to do about it. There is some minor exaggeration at times by the author, but it is made in order to make various points, points which are well founded on reason and made with extraordinary clarity. I highly recommend this to all interested in Catholic Theology, and in particular moral theology.

Fr. Pinckaers book presents a lifetime of research into Catholic Moral Theology from the Patristic

era to the present, especially focusing on the atmosphere after Trent, and the problems posed by the Protestant Reformation, and Modern Philosophy. Pinckaers shows us that many manuals of moral theology, while presenting orthodox doctrine, present the wrong reasons for that doctrine. Many books while claiming to follow St. Thomas and his brilliant Virtue Theory, actually are closer to Kant imperative: that virtue is following the Law for the Law's own sake, rather than for the sake of virtue. As a result many books rely solely on the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) rather than look at them as part of a whole, in light of the Sermon on the Mount. Pinckaers makes a terrific contribution to Catholic Moral Theology, and examines in great detail the works of Scripture, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and the protestant reformers Luther and Calvin. The book is also not filled with overly technical language. It is written in such a way that an atheist who has never heard an iota about Catholic or Protestant Moral Theology could pick up the book and understand it. Pinckaers is the most eminent moral theologian of our day.

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