

A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY ON THE PLACE OF VIRTUE ETHICS IN HUMAN FORMATION FOR THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Williams Olorunfemi, ASO, Ph.D

Seminary of All Saints

Uhiele-Ekpoma

Edo State, Nigeria

olorunfemi6697@gmail.com

Abstract

The inquiries concerning the ontological status of man and its implications for human formation for the nobility inherent in human nature become evident have been deliberated and scrutinized by diverse philosophers that defined human nature. It is palpable that Plato accentuated that man is a fallen soul imprisoned in a body and needs liberation. Aristotle called him a rational animal while Severius Boethius and Thomas Aquinas admitted that man is a rational subsistent being. Moreover, Max Scheler and Karol Wojtyla sustained that the human soul makes him an incarnate spirit. A systematic and comprehensive examination of philosophical anthropology of these philosophers unambiguously affirmed that human nature is ontologically composed of body and soul, emotion and reason, material and spiritual entities in such a way that man is neither an animal nor spirit but a rational animal. This unique status serves as a foundation of human formation that can facilitate the attainment of human personality suitable for the candidates of the Catholic priesthood in 21st century. This paper explores how Aristotelian-Aquinas' understanding of human nature and virtue ethics can help human formative processes for the seminarians that will later become the intermediaries between God and his people in the field of evangelization, bringing Christ to all and bringing all to Christ.

Keywords: human, ontology, nobility, priesthood, formation, virtue

Introduction

Human formation is a generally defined as a process of helping teenagers to recognise, appreciate and cooperate with available means of developing their inherent behavioural capacities into excellent characters to the admiration of others in the society. In the context of this paper, Catholic major seminary is the nursery bed of the church to give appropriate human formation to the candidates for the sacred priesthood of Christ. In this perspective, the primary goal of human formation in the seminary is to rationally cultivate the personal and emotional maturity of each seminarian and nurture the human qualities that are necessary to be rationally balanced and capable of bearing the weight of priestly responsibilities in our contemporary world. These responsibilities are often evident and evaluated in the ability “to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity...balanced in judgement and behaviour” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* no. 43), Hence, the seminary programmes of formation are defined, designed, determined, justified, practiced, promoted and preserved by the church authority in such way that seminarians are well-oriented and naturally behaved like those set apart from others in the society. It is the responsibility of the seminary authority in conjunction with the respective seminary commission to develop the fundamental contents and supervise the application of the needed principles and moral qualities of human formation for the seminarians of their region and time. As a matter of fact, there is need for regularly scheduled human formation conferences to address issues surrounding the seminarians’ physical well-being, habits of good nutrition and exercise, freedom from addictive behaviours, as well as addressing the essential issues in the development of a healthy emotional life, the establishment of mature friendships, maturity in dealing with qualities necessary for leadership and positive social interaction within community (nos. 43-44).

The onus is on the Dean of Seminarians’ Affairs in collaboration with other formators to assist the Rector in the development of programmes for human formation in the seminary. This is because the collaborative efforts and adequate monitoring of formators are necessary in all the various levels of human formation in the seminary. The efforts, progress and maturity of each candidates to the priesthood are often nurtured and supervised by the community of formators through lectures, seminars, conferences and tested effectiveness of acquired skills and talents through academic, social and liturgical engagements.

The appropriate human formation for the candidates of a particular nationality, region, culture and generation before ordination and incardination into a specific diocese is non-negotiable because noble

characters expected of a priest cannot automatically be derived from the grace of ordination. In his summary of *Pastores dabo vobis*, Cardinal Pio Laghi maintains, “in the normal run of things, . . . priestly ordination does not put in place a new humanity. In a personality which has not been moulded, in a character which has not had its rough edges smoothed off, in an individual who is not capable of calm and appropriate human relationships, the grace of ordination is discredited. In a mature personality, on the other hand, it shines out in all its fullness”. (<https://smseminary.org-human-formation>). Therefore, this paper attempts to demonstrate how the four cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, courage and justice obtainable from the providence of the natural law can smooth the rough edges of human traits, reason and emotions to generate excellent habitual characters that can make the nobility in human nature of seminarians of our time undoubtedly evident. The order of expository and evaluation of the concepts and issues involved in this paper are largely based on Platonic understanding of cardinal virtues. While the articulation of arguments evident in Aristotelian-Aquinas tradition will be employed for the justification of the place of each cardinal virtue in cultivating excellent habitual characters appropriate for the candidates of the sacred priesthood.

Human Formation and the Moral Character Suitable for Human Personality

A comprehensive anthropological study of man shows that human beings have some characteristics that are similar with other animals like gorillas and chimpanzees as evident in the need for food, reproduction and social life. However, the distinguished rational abilities of man that are fundamentally rooted in advanced technology and deliberative choice of action set him apart from other animals in the same genus (*Summa Theologiae*, part one of second part, q. 1, art. 1). A closer look at the anthropological foundation of Aristotelian-Aquinas’ moral philosophy explicitly shows that objective standard for evaluating if a man has adequate human formation is based on the ability of the man to practically live and act excellently well the actions that are ontologically entrenched in human nature. This is a reality that is unanimously acknowledged, cherished, preserved and promoted in every culture of the world. Hence, there is need to scrutinize and evaluate the fundamental structures of the system that Aquinas defined, analyzed, justified and promoted to elucidate the process of human formation that can facilitate a practical demonstration of human personality suitable for the seminarians of our time. Thomas Aquinas in the second part of his *Summa Theologiae* clearly argued beyond any reasonable doubt that the core of the rational element that actually distinguished human beings

from other animals in the same group is found in what is known as *synderesis* [practical reason].

The term *synderesis* is described by Aquinas as the basis of inner principles (conscience) regulating the moral consciousness of every man ‘to do good and avoid evil’. It is obvious that *synderesis* has two distinct natural powers governing human cognitive and appetitive dispositions (*Summa Theologiae*, first part, question 79, article 12). The cognitive disposition is the seat of intelligibility of the goodness that is rooted in the physical and metaphysical entities while the appetitive disposition is the power of desirability for the goodness that the rational power recognizes to be good and necessary. As Fagothey clearly upholds, “what appeals may supply a need, satisfy a desire, arouse an interest, stimulate an emotion, provoke a response, motivate a deed, or merely draw an approval” (70-71). This implies that in the process of human formation and character development, an action is good when it agrees with the rational nature of human beings and vice-versa (Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*, first part of second part, q. 18, art. 5). In human formation, therefore, what is morally valuable is whatever action that man judges to be honorably good, just, worthy, desirable and has inherent values that correspond to the nobility in human nature. Aquinas has come up with arguments to show that appropriate human formation is impossible without cultivating the necessary integration of animal and rational elements of man to generate characters needed to demonstrate to others the excellent characters that are feasible in human nature. In Aristotelian-Aquinas moral tradition, this feasibility is achievable through the use of four cardinal virtues [courage, temperament, prudence and justice] to build a solid foundation suitable for admirable characters expected of candidates for the sacred priesthood. It is pertinent to examine the contextual meaning of habit to provide a robust foundation on which the relevance of cardinal virtues in the formation of human characters can be evaluated and justified.

Habit and Attainment of Moral Character for Human Formation

The term habit is ordinarily known as human way of life that has the capacity to enhance human to act either morally or immorally about himself and others in the society. In the primary sense of the word, habit is a disposition of man toward actions that are possible in human nature. As Aristotle posits, “habit means a disposition according to which that which is disposed is either well or ill disposed, and either in itself or with reference to something else” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, bk. v, chapter 20). In the context of this paper, habit becomes natural capacity of man that can improve and strengthen the consistency of traits inherent in human nature. In human formation, good habits are cultivated into maturity to

form good characters through subtle, gradual and dynamic processes that are spread through a period of time before it can be evident in human society. In the understanding of Chukwujekwu, “habit becomes one’s second nature in the sense that one now performs or acts in the way of the already acquired character with ease” (Chukwujekwu 78). Judging from this quotation, the failure to recognise the nitty-gritty of the processes and dynamism involved in the cultivation of habits into good characters is responsible for odious actions of moral deviants that are contrary to the nobility inherent in human nature. It is obvious that, “habits are corrupted or weakened by contrary habits. Even mere neglect or laziness can weaken a habit” (Gratsch 105). Hence, in human formation it is necessary to give adequate attention to good human habits that can facilitate moral characters appropriate to seminarians that are preparing to embrace the celibate priesthood of Christ. Aside, rational sanctions are necessary to deter bad habits that are capable of becoming the sources of inhuman tendencies and abhorrent characters in their lives. Thomas Aquinas demonstrated the nuts and bolts of four cardinal virtues in the formation of honourable characters achievable in human nature.

Thomas Aquinas and the Relevance of Virtue Ethics in Human Formation

It is reasonable to briefly examine the historical background and origin of the four cardinal virtues before going to the definition and relevance of each of them in human formation for honourable characters that behave *sacerdotes inferi*, priests in the making in our major seminary. It is on record that the training of young minds with ten habitual virtues for moral integrity and nobility were at first known with the ancient Egyptian priests and neophytes that came all over the world of that time to learn from them (James 30). As evident in the work of G.G.M. James, virtues were not mere...ethical sentiments, but were positive valour and virility [powers] of the soul. Temperance meant complete control of the passional nature. Fortitude meant such courage as would not allow adversity to turn us away from our goal. Prudence meant the deep insight that befits the faculty of seership. Justice meant the unswerving righteousness of thought and action (30 and 171, Elders 454).

Plato was one of the Greek neophytes that visited ancient Egypt to learn about the Egyptian mysteries and *seboyet* [wisdom] between the sixth and seventh century BC. He later condensed the ten Egyptian virtues recommended for domesticating human emotions for man to attain appropriate moral insights inherent into four: courage, temperance, prudence and justice (James 3). These four cardinal virtues were considered as the intellectual and moral powers of human soul to

provide solutions to practical questions of day-to-day relationship with the gods and others in a dignified manner. In a nutshell, the four moral cardinal virtues that serve as the foundational stones of Aristotelian-Aquinas' formation of human character are perceptible in Plato's Republic (Aso The Place of Virtues in attainment of Final End, 125-126). It is apparent that Aristotle, a student of Plato, learnt about the four cardinal virtues in Plato's academy and elucidated more on the nitty-gritty of their interrelatedness in human formation for deliberative choice of action. Thomas Aquinas cherished the scholastic definition, analysis, justification and evaluation of the place of each of these cardinal virtues in human formation for noble characters that honour and respect human dignity (*Summa Theologiae*, part one of part two, q. 55, art. 4; q. 61, art. 2). As a way of establishing a solid foundation of human formation in any contemporary Catholic major seminary in Nigeria, it is pertinent to give analysis of how each identified virtue can contribute to the growth and development of characters that befit the candidates for the sacred priesthood in our contemporary world.

Aquinas and the Place of Prudence in Human Formation for Seminarians

The focus of human formation in the seminary revolves around the aim of helping seminarians to cherish *synderesis* or practical wisdom to behave excellently well according to the noble and moral potentialities that are naturally realistic in human life. Aquinas in his philosophy of human action defined, analyzed, justified and promoted prudence as the virtue that governs the details of factors that are involved in the phenomenology of deliberative choice of human character. As Thomas Hibbs gathers from Aquinas "prudence involves not simply the subordination of particulars to appropriate universals, but the appraisal of concrete, contingent circumstances" (Hibbs 92). If this is indisputable, it follows that human acquisition of appropriate knowledge of the principles and circumstances surrounding attainment of noble characters for seminarians is highly cumbersome. Consequently, Aquinas in his wisdom heightened the obligation of every human being, including seminarians, to previously "grasp what is pertinent and to assess what ought to be done in complex circumstances" (98) before carrying out any deliberative choice of action. Judging from this perspective, "the virtue of prudence becomes the source of excellence performances evident in memory, intelligence, foresight, circumspection, caution and shrewdness (*Summa Theologiae* part two of second part, q. 47, art. 8) of human beings before noble actions inherent in human nature can be excellently demonstrated for others to cherish. Again, it is incontrovertibly evident that any man that ignores the relevance of prudence and its subsidiaries

in human formation will definitely end up in moral blunders that often lead to improper characters that are not in tandem with human formation necessary for candidates to the sacred priesthood. This is obvious when unreasonable and cosmetic lifestyles overlaid human judgment and make deficient object of deliberative choice seems more genuine than they really are in themselves. Hence, in a house of formation for the sacred priesthood, Aquinas would underline the fact that seminarians need to know and cherish the virtue of prudence and employ the same to govern their emotional drives for characters that enhance noble characters. Nonetheless, there is need for the virtue of temperance to drive prudence to take its place of importance in honorable characters of man.

Aquinas and the Significance of Temperance in Human Formation for Seminarians

In part two of his second *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas philosophically defined the virtue of temperance as necessary restraint of bodily pleasures like the desire for food, drink, lifestyle, sexual activity and other emotional needs that are capable of making ignoble and inhuman characters abound in human life. He is quite aware that human beings often indulge in short-lived pleasures at the expense of honorable choice of action accessible in human nature because of deficient human formation. In his study of human nature, Aquinas authenticated the requisites to nurture virtues that restrain what he called concupiscence drives in the electrico-chemistry of human body that excessively indulge in pleasure and avoidance of displeasure. In this context, Aquinas is not actually condemning bodily pleasure in its entirety. Instead, he articulated arguments to heighten the fact that the virtue of temperance is essentially necessary to moderate the way and manner man enjoys pleasures that is not contrary to the nobility concomitant with human nature (art. 3). In other words, whenever the satisfaction from emotional drives are sufficiently governed, the attainment and demonstration of noble characters for others to see and admired will be adequately safeguarded. Therefore, it is palpable that abstinence, chastity, humility and similar dispositions that govern the impetuosity of bodily desires of man are derived from the virtue of temperance (*Summa Theologiae* part two of second part, q. 161, art. 4). In human formation for the candidates of celibate priesthood, the place of temperance and correlated virtues in governing the resilient urge for activities that are repulsive in human society and endanger to their vocation cannot be overemphasized.

Aquinas and the Relevance of Courage in Human Formation of Seminarians

The role of temperance as one of the cardinal virtues is very clear in taming excessive impulse coming from any bodily appetite for pleasure and habitual consequences. It is quite obvious in the phenomenology of human behavior that some emotional dispositions that are polygonal in their unique operations as often evident in emotional feeling of dilemma in which available options of action are equally desirable and undesirable (Chukwujekwu 151 and Gratch 191). In the opinion of Aquinas, the virtue of courage and its corollaries are fundamentally meant to govern irascible appetites that are awkward to achieve or avoid like hope, daring, fear, despair and restraint (Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*, part one of second part, q. 23, art. 1; Plato *The Republic*, Bk. IV, 439c). Judging from this background, Aquinas wanted us to know that sometimes certain objects of good have associated risks and fear that can inhibit human beings from obeying the command and impulse coming from *synderesis* of prudence. For instance, the fear and risk associating with giving a helping hands to a victim of accident or arm robbery especially in Nigeria of today. In this circumstance, it is worthwhile to do good and avoid evil but any attempt to throw caution into the wind, one's effort can result to stupidity and extraordinary regret. Therefore, Aquinas justified courage as the virtue that has all it takes to moderate human irascible appetites that can hinder human being from obeying the moral command of practical wisdom to prefer noble over ignoble characters in human relationship (*Summa Theologiae*, part one of second part, q. 123, art. 3). The knowledge and appreciation of the virtue of courage is necessary in human formation of seminarians for discernment in following the impulses of practical wisdom to courageously behave according to the nobility inherent in human nature and vice-versa. The upshots of the virtue of courage in human psychology includes: endurance, patience and confidence. Hence, in Aquinas' human formation, a courageous seminarian is morally equipped to persistently evaluate and confront obvious direct and indirect obstacles against his deliberative choice of honorable character with a firm hope emanating from confidence and doggedness derived from a resolution to be a man of integrity. Justice is the virtue that insists on harmonious interrelatedness of all contrivances derive four cardinal virtues to generate conventional characters in human society. It is appropriate to examine how the necessary harmony among the virtues are practically attainable in human formation.

Aquinas and the Role of Justice in Attainment of Noble Characters for Seminarians

In Plato's *Republic* the virtue of justice is fundamentally defined as the

habitual disposition to determine, justify, promote and preserve the harmonious relationship with others in a given community without making anyone subservient to others but giving each member a justified place of honour. This is a replica of Plato's thought on the distinct role of each cardinal virtue and interrelatedness among them in the generation of a deliberative choice of characters that are unique to human beings. Aquinas employed the Platonic-Aristotelian taxonomy of moral virtues to demonstrate that the function of justice is to ensure whatever is fundamentally desirable for any of the virtue is equally appropriate for the good of others and the harmony expected to exist among them (*Summa Theologiae*, part one of second part, q. 58, art. 5). In the final analysis, it is apparent that the virtue of justice is basically concerned with the harmony that ought to exist in a community where individuality and equality are cherished, promoted and preserved from any aberration; the virtue of prudence approves necessary motivation for deliberative choice of action; the virtue of temperance controls concupiscent emotions and courage fortify emotional drives against fear and despair in carrying out noble action in the society. Judging from this standpoint, it is palpable that "people fulfil their natural end by adhering to the cardinal virtues of justice, temperance, courage and prudence, of which justice is the *Summum bonum*" in accordance with the essential principles enshrined in the natural law. In other words, natural law becomes the knot that naturally tightens up the bond that exists among these cardinal virtues and their complementary influence in the growth and development of habitual and noble characters of man. It is necessary to examine the importance of natural law in the coordination of cardinal virtues for human formation.

The importance of Natural Law in Human Formation of Seminarians

In a common parlance, the idea of law in human society is designed and preserved to guide man to achieve his desirable goal and to restrain him from circumstances that can encumbered the fulfilment of any anticipated objective. Aquinas in the first part of his *Summa Theologiae* rationally defined a law as "a rule or measure of human acts, whereby a person is induced to act or is restrained from acting" (*Summa Theologiae*, part one of second part, q. 90, art. 1). The fundamental principle of law and its relationship to human action is based on the fact that the criteria of a good character is logically depends on its conformity with rational justification traceable to eternal law. This is a providential reality for every created being to act naturally according to the proper end that is ontologically established in their respective nature. In actual fact, Aquinas clearly showed that the rational and uninhibited participation of human

beings in this eternal order is acting in conformity with the natural law. This implies that natural law is the ontological platform established by God for human beings to naturally recognize the characteristics of what is good, desirable and commendable and vice versa. It is obvious in Aquinas understanding of human action that natural law is indisputably the ontological source of *synderesis*, the practical wisdom needed all the time to know what is good and do it and recognize what is evil and avoid it. Therefore, the rational capacity of *synderesis* in seminarians are to be cultivated and nurtured into habitual and virtuous capacities for noble characters. In the seminary formative processes, any attempt to overlook the ontological basis and contributions of the cardinal virtues to human deliberative choice of action, nobility will be deficient in the characters of the candidates to the priesthood.

Integration of rational abilities and emotional feelings in human formation for noble characters

The philosophical understanding of human emotions shows that they are natural drives of the animal cravings toward the object of desire and human beings share these yearnings with other animals as perceptible in the sensitive part of the soul (Kadankavil 160). As a matter of fact, anthropological studies of human formation have demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that human emotions are neither morally good nor bad until the willpower, evaluation and intentional choice of action becomes obvious. This implies that human nature is naturally porous for both honourable and dishonourable human traits and characters. Hence, the waywardness that is abound in human nature needs to be tamed through a process of human formation to liberate human beings from barbarity that is capable of obstructing attainment of noble characters (Desmond 92). Without mincing words, a closer look at Aristotelian-Aquinas anthropological theory of human action clearly shows that when emotions are govern with reason towards a good end, the action derived from such end becomes morally good, appropriate and correspond to the dignity inherent in human nature. It is also perspicuous in the aforementioned theory that when emotions are allowed to run wild, the action sourced from such disposition automatically becomes immoral, inappropriate and divergent to the nobility that ontologically characterised human nature. If this claim is incontrovertible, it implies that adequate integration of emotional and rational feelings in human formative processes basically serves as the foundation of noble characters associated with a gentleman in human society.

A systematic analysis and evaluation of the four cardinal virtues already examined illustrated the fact that each of them has prominent place in the processes of the internal and efficient principles of noble

action excellently evident in the habitual character of a man (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. II, chapter 6). In the context of this background, the four cardinal virtues become the software while human habits become the hardware of actions that define, determine, substantiate, demonstrate, facilitate, promote and preserve the dignity entrenched in human nature. Hence, a virtuous man or gentleman is the one that knows how to tame those emotions that are contrary to reason and yield to emotional derives that are sourced from rational feelings to form the basis of the deliberative choice of action in human formation (Gratsch 108; Garrette 67).

A strict observation of the processes involved clearly shows that the animal and rational natures of man are integrated together through human formation to arrive at the appropriate actions that befit human beings. As a matter of fact, it is evident in the writings of some metaphysicians like Plato and Aristotle; philosophical anthropologists like Thomas Aquinas, Max Scheler, Battista Mondin, Karol Wojtyla and religious existentialists like Paul Recour, Emmanuel Levinas, Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel that only human beings among other creatures are endowed with a character in which rational abilities and emotional tendencies are coalesced together as one. In other words, human beings are not totally spiritual to lack element of bodily structures and emotions as palpable among the spirits neither are they like other animals that have no rational abilities except instinctual drives. As a matter of fact, these two aspects of human personality are so intermingled and jointly responsible for human characters. As Joseph Omoregbe cleverly encapsulates, “man is a harmonious blend of reason and the passions. He is neither pure reason without instincts nor pure instincts without reason...As a result of this fact, man’s instincts are rational instincts, i.e, instincts permeated with rationality (103). Hence, no one can easily separate the influence of the two factors in human character and able to justify the ontological basis of human formation and personality with associated values in human society. As Omoregbe further claims, “it is because man is a blend of reason and passions that he is capable of weeping (sympathy, love, hatred, benevolence, judgment etc.), neither a god nor a beast is capable of weeping; the former is incapable because it is a disembodied being without passions while the latter is incapable because it lacks reason” (104). Judging from this milieu, it means that the instinctual tendencies apparent in ordinary animals are guided purely by regular emotional instincts whereas the ones ostensible with human beings are imparted by rational emotional dispositions. This implies that any attempt to have unblended foundation of rational abilities with emotional feelings in human formation would

automatically lead to characters that are depraved and contrary to human dignity.

It is appropriate that every youngsters especially those in the house of formation and formators to remember and appreciate the fact that human nature is not purely emotional, spiritual, rational or irrational but fundamentally involved in the aforementioned aspects of man and obviously integrated into natural inclinations necessary for human characters. In other words, “human formation is all about the development of a well-rounded and competent man, possessing personal maturity. The basis of this is the fact that we human beings are physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, social, intellectual and spiritual with the potentiality of each being fully realized by our efforts of co-operating with God’s grace”. Therefore, the necessity of human formative processes for candidates to the priesthood can never be overstressed because seminarians are not angelic beings with the nature and character that is already determined, structured, universal, logical, fixed, immutable, eternal and perfectly composed to remain the same all the time like those in a mathematical world where $3+3$ constantly equals to 6.

It is unmistakably clear that human beings including seminarians are composed of body and soul, reason and passion by which they are exceptionally different from other creatures and need to pass through a process of human formation before attaining excellent characters. This implies that, “since the charism of celibacy...leaves man’s affections and his instinctive impulses intact, candidates to the priesthood need an affective maturity which is prudent, able to renounce anything that is a threat to it, vigilant over body and spirit, and capable of esteem and respect in interpersonal relationship between men and women” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* no. 44). In the context of this paper, Seminarians are obliged to learn how to guide themselves with rational moral calculus to gain foresight for avoidance of any fundamental bad habit that can primarily hinder honorable characters ontologically concomitant with human nature become evident in them. After all, “the goal of the entire seminary formation...should be the development of moral leadership and witness the seminarian manifest to others” (no. 44). This is not easily attainable without some disciplines, sacrifice, practice, pain, patience, perseverance, determination and hope. Therefore, it is required that seminarians assiduously cultivate the integration of four cardinal virtues to have appropriate human formation so that the nobility associated with human nature can be exceptionally obvious in their character for their good and the good of the church.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for an appropriate human formation of seminarians to reach an appreciable end, rational abilities are needed for dignified moral choice and precision while emotions are necessarily guided for moral impetus and moral virtues are gradually cultivated for habitual dispositions for noble characters conceivable in human nature (Harman 1). The habitual dispositions sourced from the phenomenological interrelationship of reason, emotions and cardinal virtues will eventually become the repository of noble characters expected to characterize the personality and moral ideals of whoever successfully allows human formative processes of the major seminary to pass through him. There is no doubt that human nature is morally promiscuous and can easily wandered into habitual dispositions that are capable of disfiguring the ontological nobility that clearly sets man apart from other animals. However, the conceivable clashes between reason and emotions, good and bad habits, desires and deliberative choice in the process of forming human characters can easily dissolve into a moral disposition that transcends the purported phenomenological conflicts among all the factors that play indispensable roles in the formation of human character provided discipline, sacrifice, assiduousness, perseverance and nobility are appreciated by the seminarians of our time.

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