Decorum

“Friend—how came thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?” (Matt 22:12)

1. Prelim.
   1. Virtue (Aristotle 🡪 Averroes 🡪 Aquinas)
      1. “In medio stat virtus.” Virtue seeks the mean, whereas vice errs by excess or defect.
         1. Raphael, School of Athens
      2. Virtue of Decorum: that virtue which seeks the beautiful, the elegant, and the graceful proper to the occasion.
         1. Exterior motions of the body, exterior dress
   2. Natural Law Morality 101
      1. Object (What?)
      2. Circumstances (Who? When? Where?)
      3. Intention (Why?)
   3. Example
      1. Object: chasuble—cloth of gold encrusted with jewels.
      2. Circum.: metropolitan archbishop, Christmas Midnight Mass, in his cathedral.
      3. Intention: to render “all glory, laud, and honor” to Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh!
2. **Circumstances**
   1. **Excess**: e.g., COMFORT of the body (II-II, q. 169, art. 1)
      1. E.g., “It’s SO HOT today, so I won’t wear sleeves to Mass.”
         1. Not wrong in ITSELF not to wear sleeves—e.g., at the beach; but this is to be unaware of the proper CIRCUMSTANCES.
      2. E.g., “These pajama pants are just SO comfy, I think I’ll wear them everywhere!”
         1. PJs, YPs, and NPs, are fitting for pajama parties, yoga classes, and bathing, but not—of course!—for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
            1. Old adage: “The things that ought to go without saying, often go better when said.”
   2. **Defect** 1: e.g., NEGLECT of proper attire (II-II, q. 169, art. 1)
      1. E.g., “I don’t really *care* that it is a wedding banquet, so I’ll just wear what I want.”
         * 1. Again, nothing wrong with casual clothes—the problem here is that the CIRCUMSTANCES are not correct.
3. **Intention**
   1. **Bad**
      1. If men or women “adorn themselves with the intention of provoking others to desire them [*ad concupiscentiam*], they sin mortally; whereas if they do so out of fickleness [*levitas*], or even out of vanity and ostentation [*iactantia*], it is not always mortal, but sometimes venial” (II-II, q. 168, art. 2).[[1]](#footnote-1)
   2. **Good**
      1. All human beings are to dress for the honor of God and in charity for one’s neighbor.
4. **Interior decorum, interior beauty**
   1. “For we … who are in this tabernacle [of the flesh], do groan, [longing] not to be … unclothed [that is, without bodies], but clothed all the more [in the interior man], that that which is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now he that maketh us for this very thing is God, who hath given us the pledge of His Spirit” (2Cor 5:4-5).
   2. May God “grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit with might unto the interior man … to come to know also [Jesus] Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge: that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God” (Eph 3:14).

Prayer (postcommunion)

* 1. Grant unto us, O LORD, that we who [are about to be] nourished with the strength of thy heavenly banquet table, may desire those things which are right, and, having desired them, obtain them.” [[2]](#footnote-2)

1. “Et si quidem hac intentione se ornent ut alios provocent, ad concupiscentiam, mortaliter peccant. Si autem ex quadam levitate, vel etiam ex vanitate propter quandam iactantiam, non semper est peccatum mortale, sed quandoque veniale. Et eadem ratio, quantum ad hoc, est de viris.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Tríbue nobis, Dómine, cæléstis mensæ virtúte satiátis: et desideráre, quæ recta sunt, et desideráta percípere.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)