

Moral Choices XII

There are systems, which affect our moral decision making processes.

[Reflections based on J Haidt *The Righteous Mind*]

We find that “Moral Foundation Theory” [what I have been writing about] says there are at least six psychological systems that comprise the foundation of the world’s many moral matrices.

Care/Harm, Liberty/Oppression and Fairness/Cheating

1. From the liberal side, the various moralities tend to rest most strongly on this one. Care/Harm supports ideals of social justice, which emphasize compassion for the poor and a struggle for political equality. They call for people to come together in solidarity to fight oppression. Everyone, left, right and centrist care about Care/Harm, but liberals care more, especially in regard to violence and suffering.
2. Liberty/Oppression; we all care about this but in different ways. Liberals tend to be more concerned about right of vulnerable groups while conservatives tend to emphasize liberty as the right to be left alone, thus resenting liberal programs that infringe on their right to be left alone.
3. Fairness/Cheating is another system that helps us navigate morality. Making sure that people get what they deserve and do not get things they do not deserve is called “proportionality” – some call this the law of Karma: often characterized by “What goes around comes around,” that is reaping the result of our actions and attitudes. Liberals may tend to think they own Karma because of its “new age” associations, but a morality based on Karma also has a negative side, that is retribution. “Do the crime, do the time” and “three strikes and you’re out.” Retribution causes harm, and harm activates the Care/Harm foundation. For example Professor Haidt found that Liberal professors tend to give a narrower range of grades than do conservative professors, who are more willing to reward the best and punish the worst.

IHM Pray for us.

Fr. Jerry