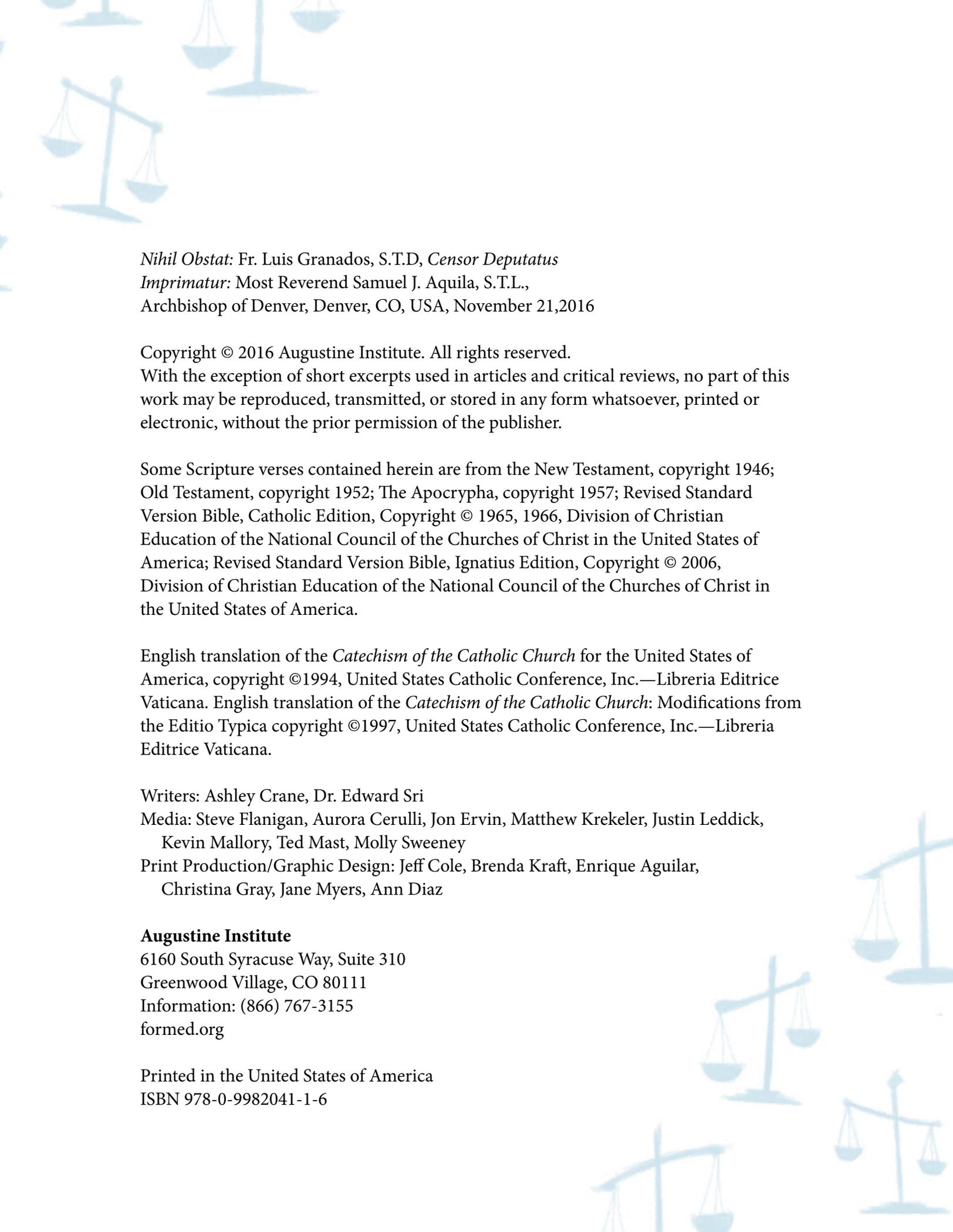


# WHO AM I TO JUDGE?



## SESSION 8

What is Truth?  
Answering Common  
Questions

The background of the page features several faint, light blue illustrations of scales of justice, scattered across the top and right sides. The scales are depicted in various orientations, some showing the pans and the central pillar.

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# SESSION 8

## What Is Truth? Answering Common Questions

### STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

#### Act of Love

O Lord God,

I love you above all things

and I love my neighbor for your sake

because you are the highest, infinite, and perfect good,  
worthy of all my love.

In this love I intend to live and die.

Amen.

Too many question marks  
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## INTRODUCTION

Challenging our relativistic culture is not easy. We must have a clear understanding of the classical view of morality and the importance of virtue and friendship, a picture of what real freedom looks like, and a vision for learning the art of living. And most importantly: the guiding and unifying principle for every encounter must be love. Love not only guides what we say and how we say it—it is our reason for saying anything at all.

In this final session we will look at several common questions about moral relativism and how we talk about it to others. These questions will help us reflect on what we have learned in the study and begin to tie it all together in order to go out and engage moral relativism.

## STEP 2: CONNECT

**What is the biggest insight you've taken away from this study? How will this impact your life?**

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### DIGGING DEEPER

*“My opinion is that all those who lack knowledge of God are those who refuse to turn to him. I am certain that they refuse because they imagine this kindly disposed God to be harsh and severe, this merciful God to be callous and inflexible, this lovable God to be cruel and oppressive. So it is that wickedness plays false to itself, setting up for itself an image that does not represent him.”*

—St. Bernard of Clairvaux (*Sermon 38 on the Song of Songs, 2*)

## STEP 3: VIDEO

- I. How can we talk to friends who think they are happy?
  - A. Have the confidence that what they are experiencing is not true happiness: our hearts are restless until they rest in God
  - B. Model true happiness, joy, and genuine love for them
- II. How do I learn the Art of Living so that I can tell other people about it?
  - A. Don't have to be an expert—start to share with the little you've already received
  - B. Learn more
    1. Seek out an education on the virtues
    2. Surround yourself with like-minded people seeking the same thing
    3. Look for someone to learn from—a priest or spiritual director, a married couple, or someone a little older—to ask questions and just “catch what they have”
    4. Read about the virtues

- III. How do we communicate to people that a classical worldview of morality is freeing and not restricting?
  - A. Goes back to the question, “Are you really happy?”
  - B. Might not want to change behavior, but what is the ultimate goal? Is this behavior leading to true friendship or not?
- IV. Relativism is not value-neutral. Is this intrinsic to relativism as a philosophy, or is it the application of the philosophy?
  - A. Most people haven’t thought their worldview out that well and don’t realize that it isn’t neutral
  - B. Asking the question can lead to a conversation
- V. What do we say to people who are content with mediocrity?
  - A. Many great saints were here at one point
    - 1. St. Augustine: “Lord, give me chastity, but not yet”
    - 2. Intellectually convinced, but not wanting to make the change
  - B. This is why we need to engage both heart and mind
  - C. St. Bernard of Clairvaux: Why are there so many people who don’t turn to God? “Because they imagine this kind and gentle God to be severe. . . . They think that God can’t help them.” Jesus is in the business of freeing prisoners.
- VI. What do we say to people who think that perfection is unattainable (the Church offers something perfect, and there is nothing perfect)?
  - A. The fact that we desire perfection indicates that perfection must be possible
  - B. We experience hurt and we don’t like it—this indicates that we weren’t made for hurt
- VII. How do you respond to a humanitarian relativism that says we don’t need the Church because others will do the work?
  - A. Look at what the Church has actually done in history
  - B. Many people criticizing the Church aren’t actually doing the work of encountering and serving the poor
  - C. Relativism can’t require anyone to take care of others—Christian morality does
  - D. An eighth key to combat relativism might be the prophetic witness of the radical generosity of caring for others

## DIGGING DEEPER

*“Anyone who seeks truth seeks God, whether or not he realizes it.”*

—St. Edith Stein (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

### STEP 4: DISCUSS

**1. What was one thing from the video that you heard for the first time or that was an “aha” moment for you?**

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**2. What do you think is the greatest difficulty in engaging moral relativism? Why?**

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**3. How has this study affected the way you think about and approach moral relativism?**

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## STEP 5: COMMIT

In John's Gospel, Jesus says, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). This abundant life that Jesus offers us is one in which we imitate him and live in his love. In Christ, we grow in the virtues we need to live out our relationships well and find our happiness. It is a life of purpose. It is a life where we are free to live with excellence and fulfill our *telos*.

**What is one way this study has inspired you to love more and to be a better person—a better friend, spouse, parent, neighbor, or child of God? Ask God to help you live out these inspirations: he is always near you and his grace can help you do what you could never do on your own.**

**Take some time to pray with the following passage from Deuteronomy and journal your reflections below.**

*"For this commandment which I command you this day is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it."*

—Deuteronomy 30:11–14

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## DIGGING DEEPER

*“We do not really want a religion that is right where we are right. We want a religion that is right where we are wrong. We do not want, as the newspapers say, a church that will move with the world. We want a church that will move the world.”*

—G.K. Chesterton (*The Catholic Church and Conversion*)

## STEP 6: WRAP-UP AND CLOSING PRAYER

Father, your truth is made known in your Word.  
Guide us to seek the truth of the human person.  
Teach us the way to love because you are Love.  
Jesus, you embody Love and Truth.  
Help us to recognize your face in the poor.  
Enable us to live out our vocation  
to bring love and justice to your people.  
Holy Spirit, you inspire us to transform our world.  
Empower us to seek the common good for all persons.  
Give us a spirit of solidarity and make us one human family.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

—Prayer based on Pope Benedict XVI’s  
2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*

