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A Vocation-Virtue Tandem: A Meta-Model of the Person as a Framework for Virtue, Vocation, Mental Health, and Flourishing.

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Abstract.

This paper addresses two questions. First, how does making explicit the religious, philosophical, and psychological presuppositions in a meta-model of the person serve mental health practice and flourishing? In particular, how might making explicit the eleven premises of the Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person promote mental health practice and flourishing in clients who self-identify as Catholic or Christian? Second, what benefits come from the interplay of two of these eleven premises, one that is familiar (that "virtues lead to a flourishing life") and one that is less familiar (that "vocations lead to a flourishing life"). Focusing on the interdependence of vocations and virtues (the vocation-virtue tandem), the paper addresses the benefits that a multidimensional meta-model offers for understanding the mental health and flourishing of the person and his or her interpersonal relationships, in an integrated approach.

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This paper focuses on mental health practice in addressing the virtues and a flourishing life. A mental health perspective, like any other perspective on the virtues and a flourishing life, requires starting points or presuppositions about the nature of the person and of reality. It is becoming more widespread to admit that each approach to mental health should make explicit its presuppositions about human flourishing. It is also becoming more widespread to admit that it is beneficial to make explicit the worldview and value-system, as well as the axioms and premises, including religious ones, operative in mental health practitioner–client relationships.[1] It is my understanding that there are a good number of people, or clients (in mental health terms), that seek a mental health professional who will take into consideration their religious resources and beliefs.[2]

In this paper, I am interested in exploring a particular worldview in the context of mental health practice and training. The particular worldview is called the Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person.[3] It has been developed over the last twenty years by the Institute for the Psychological Sciences (now a part of Divine Mercy University, in Sterling, Virginia). This Meta-Model explicitly identifies eleven foundational premises as part of a Catholic Christian worldview.

The context of this Meta-Model and its eleven premises (and numerous sub-premises) are of great interest in general. However, for our conference program here and its consideration of the virtues and a flourishing life, the second part of the paper will address the question: What benefits come from the interplay of two of these eleven premises, one that is familiar (that "the *virtues* lead to a flourishing life") and one that may be less familiar (that "the *vocations* lead to a flourishing life"). My research question addresses how virtue is impoverished when it lacks reference to the larger considerations that vocations demand. By exploring the contribution of the vocation-virtue tandem, the paper addresses the benefits that come from considering both vocation and virtue within the multidimensional Catholic Christian Meta-Model, in particular, how these considerations benefit one's understanding of mental health and a flourishing life.

1. A Meta-Model to Serve Mental Health Practice and a Flourishing Life

Because, as was already mentioned, I am addressing the context of clinical mental health practice, I will use examples from mental health clinicians, from within the program in which I teach—a doctoral program for clinical psychologists. I participate as a professor of integration of philosophy and theology with psychology. The psychologists and counselors of this program are interested in understanding the place of the presuppositions of ultimate worldviews and value-systems, in general, so they may better serve all clients, be they Christian, persons of other faiths, or nonbelievers. In particular, the students are concerned to discover how an explicit Catholic Christian meta-model can promote a coherent understanding of the person for mental health

[1] In particular, the mental health clinician–client relationship's informed consent agreements may be the place to record explicit openness to working in a professional context that considers religious beliefs and resources. In ongoing treatment, the client's expressed desire to use religious resources can also be recorded in clinical reports. Moreover, the study of the influence of religious belief and practice has demonstrated the positive and negative effects of certain images of God or religious practices. See Koenig, King, & Carson (2012) and Pargament (2012).

[2] See Plante (1999 & 2009) and Shafranske (2014).

[3] See Vitz, Nordling, & Titus (2020).

practice with clients who self-identify as Catholic and Christian,[4] while also having some diversity in belief, practice, and culture.[5]

I start by considering how every coherent presentation of the flourishing life implicitly or explicitly expresses a worldview and value-system. For, in a sense, there is no generic or value-free position.[6] Rather, any so-called generic vision of the person is necessarily linked to values as a normative base for mental health theories and practice, as well as for professional ethics.[7] In this paper, I try to make explicit the psychological, philosophical, and spiritual presuppositions of a Catholic Christian vision for understanding the person, the virtues, and the flourishing life.[8]

a. How does making explicit a meta-model of the person serve mental health practice and a flourishing life?

My first major question is this: how might making explicit the psychological, philosophical, and spiritual presuppositions for understanding the person give rise to an integrated, non-reductionist, and systematic meta-model of the person? And how does such a meta-model serve mental health practice and a flourishing life?

It is becoming more common to admit that worldviews and value-systems influence the health and wellbeing of individuals as well as their perception of reality. At least this is the position that has taken shape, for instance, in the debates of Albert Ellis and Allen Bergin[9] about the inescapability of underlying presuppositions for every psychotherapy. It has also taken form in the various psychological studies articulated from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and other explicitly religious perspectives on the person and family.[10] The affirmation that everyone has an ultimate worldview and value-system has led to further studies and further claims about the relationship between religious practice and physical or mental health.[11]

To understand the person in mental health practice, we benefit by recognizing explicitly (or at least implicitly) the person's basic worldview and value-system or spirituality and religion. Rosmarin (2018) and VanderWeele (2017) document how many people in Western societies are religious and benefit from religious practice,[12] people who, moreover, often wish to engage their religious belief and practices as resources for healing and flourishing. They have the conviction that some religious practices have positive value, while also admitting that some religious practices have negative value. For instance, negative spiritual cognitions, feelings, or relations with God might include a lack of confidence in God, or a concept of God as being hateful or unforgiving, or indifference to God. Such negative experiences might be due to distortions of faith and faith-based reason, or to trauma, or to other life experiences.[13] By contrast, positive

[4] For the last 20 years, we have been developing this theory and practice in a doctoral level clinical psychology program that is accredited by the American Psychological Association. The program is offered by the Institute for the Psychological Sciences, now a part of Divine Mercy University. Its new campus is in Sterling, Virginia (USA).
[5] See Arthur, Harrison, & Davison (2015), Pargament (2014), and Plante (1999 & 2015).
[6] Ashley (2000 & 2013).
[7] I make this case in Titus (2017).
[8] On issues related to value bracketing in mental health practice, see McWhorter (2019).
[9] Bergin (1980) and Ellis (1980).
[10] Richards & Bergin (2014).
[11] Koenig, King, & Carson (2012) and Pargament (2014).
[12] See Rosmarin (2018), VanderWeele (2017), and Plante (2009).
[13] On the negative conceptions of God, see Currier, Drescher, & Harris (2014) and Drescher, Kent & Foy (2008).

instances of religious practice would include trusting God even when one is anxious, understanding God as forgiving, and being securely attached to God in love.[14]

b. What is a meta-model of the person?

I would like to define a term that will be important for my argument. What is a meta-model of the person? A meta-model integrates different models and serves to analyze related models or theories and practices in a larger conceptual context. Models, themselves, serve to measure things from a circumscribed perspective. A truthful model is measured by how consistent it is with reality. A heuristic model is measured by its capacity to help transform reality. But a meta-model serves as a framework for appraising and analyzing other models, theories, and practices. It is a model of models that by its nature is multidisciplinary.[15]

The Catholic Christian Meta-Model identifies a framework for understanding how Catholic Christians over the centuries have understood what makes the person flourish or languish. Other meta-models exist and can be recognized by their ways of articulating presuppositions about flourishing and languishing, about reductionism, determinism, materialism, subjectivism, emotivism, and social constructivism, as well as different types of theism, agnosticism, and atheism. For its part, the Catholic Christian Meta-Model integrates the input of the arts and humanities, the theoretical and empirical sciences, and evidence-based practices concerning human behavior and therapeutic change. It is rooted in the theological and philosophical understanding of the human flourishing and languishing of individuals, friends, spouses, families, and communities. The Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person provides a structure and narrative for judging whether particular psychological theories and mental health practices are consistent with the Catholic Christian worldview and value-system.

As a *meta*-model framework, the Catholic Christian Meta-Model integrates particular theories and practices into overarching principles. This paper focuses on the capacity of these principles (as nonexclusive and expansive) to deepen our understanding of the human person in a global understanding of mental health theory and practices. Among other benefits, this Meta-Model expands one's understanding of the person with an integrative, non-reductionist, and systematic vision of the person and relationships.[16]

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[14] On the positive conceptions of God, see Harris, Erbes, Engdahl, Thuras, Murray-Swank, & Grace (2011) and Witvliet, Phipps, Feldman, & Beckham (2004).

[15] In particular, we ask, how does making explicit the psychological, philosophical, and spiritual presuppositions for understanding the person give rise to an integrated, non-reductionist, and systematic meta-model, that is, a philosophical and religious anthropology (a meta-model), which serves mental health practice and flourishing? Furthermore, there are examples of more tightly focused meta-models. For example, Steven Morris (2003) conceptualizes a meta-model that puts psychological theories and mental health practice in a context of theories of psychotherapy. His idea of a meta-model delineates the underlying structure of theories to "provide a framework for analyzing, comparing, and integrating the basic concepts and principles of theories of psychotherapy" (Morris, 2003, p. 1) and for a theory of psychotherapy to use "theories to build case formulations and treatment plans out of clinical data" (Morris, 2003, p. 16).

[16] The Meta-Model serves as a framework that expands our understanding of the person. An account of the benefits of the Catholic Christian vision of the person is found in Nordling, Vitz, & Titus (2020, pp. 3–19). Elsewhere, I have addressed how admitting presuppositions of one's worldview and value-system (including spirituality and religion) permits one to distinguish the dimensions of a unified understanding of virtue as reason-based (involving moral aims and spiritual goals), as act-based (involving behavior), and as agent-based (involving stable and changing dispositions concerning cognition and affect, including interpersonal dimensions) (Titus, Vitz, Nordling, McWhorter, & Gross. 2020, pp. 249–305). These and the other dimensions of virtue permit indentifying the person as an object, who is observed in empirical studies, as well as a subject, who is active in therapeutic, moral, and spiritual change (Titus, 2017).

c. How might explicit treatment of a Catholic Christian meta-model with eleven anthropological premises promote understanding the person and flourishing?

Taking this question deeper, I will now address another level: How might making explicit the presuppositions of a specifically Catholic Christian meta-model with its basic premises promote a coherent understanding of the person and a flourishing life?[17] The Catholic Christian Meta-Model expands our understanding of the person through a broadened use of reason and of faith-informed reason (Benedict XVI, 2006). What the Meta-Model provides is a framework to complete our vision of reality, broadening some narrower approaches to reason and faith.[18] We come to broadened reason (and faith-informed reason) through three wisdom traditions and three sources of expertise but also three sets of presuppositions, rooted in the wisdom of psychology, philosophy, and theology. Three definitions of the person align with these three wisdom traditions (see Annex, Table 1: Tripartite Definition of the Person).

i. Theological wisdom and three premises

First, there is faith-based reason and wisdom. Starting from faith-based presuppositions, we consider theological, spiritual, and religious knowledge and practice, including the ultimate or transcendent wisdom of God. In the theological perspective of wisdom, the Meta-Model employs faith and reason from a Catholic Christian theological understanding of the person and interpersonal relationships, which includes (taking account of the differences existing among Catholics) considerations of revelation, divine grace, and human nature; the flourishing of virtue and the languishing due to vice; and the types of committed callings (vocations) that lead to flourishing or languishing.

The theological perspective is seen in three premises about the person: (1) That there is an indelible essential core of goodness and dignity in each human person, and there is an ultimate transcendent source of life (in the words of the Meta-Model, the person is created in the image of God). (2) That there is a secondary level of injury, distress, and suffering that is common in human experience (the person is wounded by original, social, and personal sin). And (3) that through reason, love, and transcendence people can find meaning, healing, and hope for change in life (the person is offered redemption).

ii. Philosophical wisdom and eight premises

These three theological premises are complemented by anthropological ones that articulate philosophical wisdom in eight further premises: (4) That the person is a whole (a body-soul or body-mind unity) seeking healing and further wholeness. (5) That the person flourishes through committed vocations to goodness, vocational states, and work and meaningful leisure. (6) That the person flourishes in the virtues, especially when they are interconnected. (7) That the person is interpersonally relational by nature. That the person experiences reality through the unity of his or her capacities; these capacities can be summarized as being (8) sensory-perceptual-cognitive, (9) emotional, (10) rational, and (11) volitional and free.

The philosophical perspective of wisdom in the Catholic Christian Meta-Model seeks to broaden reason (and faith-based reason) and to correct misunderstandings about human nature and the

[17] The philosophical bridging to respond to this question involves a neo-Aristotelian-Augustinian-Thomist appreciation of virtue, flourishing, and objective wellbeing as complex.

[18] Benedict XVI (2006).

individual. It seeks to expand the vision of a person, a vision that is narrowed through reductionism (which assumes a denial of metaphysics), relativism (which assumes no objective ethical norms), and determinism (which assumes a lack of free will). Overcoming the narrowing of reason is what Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (2006) addressed in his Regensburg address. The same attempt is found also in the personalist movement's search to understand what it means to be a human person.[19]

[19] For instance, the personalist movement has sought to correct the reductionist vision of the person, when it becomes rationalist and individualist. For instance, people have misunderstood Boethius and his definition of the person as an "individual substance of a rational nature" not to involve relationship (1918a/513 & 1918b/519). Others have misunderstood Augustine on free will or Thomas Aquinas on virtue and moral duties, or John Paul II on the spousal meaning of the person.

Psychological wisdom and eleven premises

Third, there is psychology's complementary approach to reason and practical wisdom. Based on psychological presuppositions, we consider mental health theory, empirical study, and clinical practice, which also include a practical wisdom in bringing theory and practice to application in clinical practice (including psychopharmacology). The psychological perspective of wisdom promotes a multileveled notion of humans, both as individuals and in various interpersonal relationships. Philosophical and theological wisdom is complemented by the theoretical, empirical, and practical wisdom of psychology.

These three wisdoms are three interrelated ways that flourishing or objective wellbeing can be expressed and promoted. They serve best when they are appropriated to contribute to a multidimensional meta-model that is built upon the theoretical and practical wisdom contributed by each of the three levels.[20] At these three levels, the Meta-Model makes explicit an expanded study of the person.

What does the Meta-Model bring to understanding the person through these definitions and the related sub-premises and sources of expertise? The premises are expansive and catholic, that is, open to a broader understanding of reason and of the Catholic faith. They are non-reductionistic—they are open to faith and religious practice as well as the way it can be distorted. The Meta-Model premises are integrative (or synthetic) and systematic. They serve as the structure of the Catholic Christian Meta-Model framework. The premises remind us of the greatness, dignity, and uniqueness of each person; and they identify the levels on which the person, couple, and family can suffer, that is, from where they are called out of languishing and toward fuller flourishing.

[20] Vitz, Nordling, & Titus (2020, pp. 115–144).

2. Vocation-Virtue Tandem

My second major question is this: What benefits for understanding mental health and a flourishing life come from an explicit reference to vocations in tandem with virtues? I would like to offer several considerations about the purpose, meaning, and end of a flourishing life in terms of vocation and virtue, or, metaphorically, in terms of a vocation-virtue tandem.[21]

a. Virtue: The Meta-Model's multidimensional definition of virtue.

First, I start with virtue. The Meta-Model posits that the human person "flourishes through virtue."[22] A dynamic view of the person requires a complex understanding of the person's strengths and weaknesses, virtues and vices, as well as moral character and spiritual maturity or lack thereof.

The Meta-Model's integrative definition of virtue draws from Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, as well as from personalist sources, to affirm that virtues are an important part of objective wellbeing and a flourishing life.[23] The virtues involve acts aimed at a true end, which contributes to making the agent good through a flourishing life.[24] Persons are fulfilled in virtue. For Aristotle and Aquinas, humans flourish only because of the acquisition (albeit partial and progressive) of an interconnection of virtuously formed capacities, which transform the agent at cognitive and affective levels, and which allow them to freely perform virtuous acts (internal and external acts); acts are understood here in the light of being end-driven (purposeful) and based in rational moral standards (ethical).[25]

When taken in an incomplete manner, the term "virtue" is more often misunderstood than are the particular virtues. For instance, we readily identify that virtues such as patience, moderation, courage, and forgiveness are positive and constructive human qualities that contribute to objective wellbeing.[26] The virtues are expressed in the functioning of human capacities, moral goodness of acts, the vivacity of relationships, and the attainment of ends. Virtues, because they provide meaning (through the virtue of counsel), goals (through the virtue of hope), and purpose (through the virtue of practical wisdom), guide a person throughout life, at everyday and transcendent levels. Likewise, there is a wide acceptance of the golden rule and the self-giving sacrifice of the virtue of benevolence and charity-love that are the foundation of human interpersonal self-understanding and the Judeo-Christian tradition.[27]

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[21] I am led by the question: What benefits come from recognizing the pertinence of the virtues and the vocations for a flourishing life? The presentation focuses on the benefits of understanding the virtues of the person and interpersonal relationships in light of the committed responses to vocations, that is, to callings to: goodness, vocational states, and work. This is what can be called the vocation-virtue tandem or partnership.

[22] See Titus, Vitz, et al. (2020).

[23] Aquinas (1273/1981).

[24] On the use of virtues in psychology, see also: Peterson & Seligman (2004). For an overview of virtue theories, see MacIntyre (1984) and Snow (2017).

[25] This approach to the virtues can be analyzed by the different causal factors and conditions. For instance, the virtue of courage engages the will (efficient cause) to seek a good end, such as the defense of the person, family, or nation (final cause); it involves the emotional capacity (material cause) to manage (formal cause) fear and daring well. See Austin (2017).

[26] There are many ways that virtues have been conceptualized, as accounted for by MacIntyre (1984) and Snow (2017).

[27] The virtue of love is widely acclaimed in human history. It has been given positive formulations as commands, such as that in the law and the prophets: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18; Mt ; see also Jer 7:9); in the Gospels, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:39, Mk 12:31), as the golden rule: "do unto others as you would have them do unto you;" the principle of beneficence (APA Code of Ethics), or the Kantian

In such a non-reductionist approach, the Catholic-Christian Meta-Model of the Person has developed an integrated, multidimensional understanding (or definition) of virtue, drawing from the thought of Aristotle and Aquinas. The Meta-Model's definition of flourishing and objective wellbeing identifies thirteen dimensions of the virtues, as (1) performative (act-based); (2) perfective and corrective (agent-based); (3) purposeful (reason-based and teleological); (4) ethical (moral norm–based); (5) influenced by personal uniqueness, equal innate dignity, and complementarity; (6) connective, relational, and developmental; (7) learned through role models; (8) moderating (aimed at the mean of virtue); (9) preventative (strength-based); (10) non-reductionist (contextual); (11) applied (enhanced through research and practice); (12) vocational (calling-based); and (13) open to the transcendent and to God. I have argued for the pertinence of these thirteen dimensions in another publication.[28] (See Annex, Table 4. Characteristics of the Thirteen Dimensions of Virtues and Vices)

b. Vocation: The Meta-Model's tripartite structure of vocations.

What contribution does a consideration of vocations add to such a robust notion of virtue? Of course, you noticed that "vocation" was listed as a dimension of virtue. In contemporary parlance, the concept of vocation is often under-developed or over-limited. For instance, it refers to work-related vocations, which involve discernment of a call and the training needed in response—this includes the vocation to serve as a medical doctor,[29] or the vocation to heal as a mental health practitioner.[30] It also can mean a "religious vocation," when someone discerns a calling to the priesthood or religious consecrated life. Underlying such examples and a larger philosophical notion of virtue, there is a tripartite teleological structure to each vocation, as well as three domains of vocation.

Table 2: The Three-fold Structure of Vocation: Call-Response-Change	
Call	*encounter with and attraction to a good*
Response	*engagement with that good*
Change	*the transformation due to the communication with the good, often in terms of purpose and meaning and joy*

Because of the relational nature of the person, there is a common structure of vocations, even though there are unique expressions of them. What does this structure of vocation look like? A person encounters a good as attractive and as evoking, or calling for, a response (this "calling" is the basis for the vocation). The response to this encounter with the good, in turn, changes the

categorical imperative. It has also been expressed in negative formulations, such as the silver rule (do not do to others what you would not have them do to you), the personalist norm (see Wojtyła, 1993); and "do no harm" (APA Code of Ethics).

[28] Initial support and clinical pertinence for the virtues is found in Titus, Vitz, Nordling, McWhorter, & Gross (2010).

[29] Laurel (2018).

[30] For reference to psychology as a vocation to heal, see Ashley (2013). See also Wiener (2002).

person. Thus, the triadic structure of vocation is call-response-change (encounter-response-transformation). In a Meta-Model perspective, a vocation is a response to a good end that changes a person, making the person flourish.[31] A vocation contributes to each person's unique flourishing according to the nature of the human person, which is guided in its development by the dynamic inclinations underlying natural moral law and transformed by divine grace. This larger understanding of vocation also draws upon Karol Wojtyła's description of vocation, which reads the question "what is my vocation?" to mean "in what direction should my personality develop, considering what I have in me, what I have to offer, and what others—other people and God—expect of me?"[32]

The Meta-Model's understanding of vocation is grounded in a realist metaphysical perspective, such as Aristotle's or Aquinas's, that finds goodness to be diffusive of itself according to the nature of the good, be it a good of justice, a spousal good, a friendship-related good, or a work-related good. This insight is affirmed by the neo-Platonic dictum, *bonum est diffusivum sui*.[33] Good things and the goodness of people are diffusive when they serve as a goal or an end for another's good desire, action, and relationships. Such goods "call" to and attract the person, creating an end-driven knowledge of and desire for communion or communication with the good. The person, however, is not changed by this attraction to the good without a free response to the good that is encountered through the call.

How then would I define a vocation in general (this tripartite structure)? A vocation is the intentional and end-driven change of a person (or group of persons) that is due to someone's (or a group's) responding to a particular good that is fit to his or her nature. For instance, there is the call that spouses experience. Each is attracted to the good in the other. Then, they freely commit themselves for a life of faithful love, open to new life, in marriage. This mutual commitment is their response. Next, they are changed. Their status and responsibilities change on societal, legal, and sacramental levels as the spouses respond to the call to lifelong commitment in marriage.[34]

c. The Meta-Model's three domains of vocations.

This tripartite structure of vocation (call-response-change) gets played out in three domains: in a universal call to holiness, in states of life (single, married, ordained), and in work and leisure. These three domains are end-driven, aimed at a flourishing life. The Meta-Model posits that these three domains of commitment are responses at two levels. There are (a) existential (everyday) callings as well as (b) transcendent (or religious, faith-based) callings. These two levels are expressed in the three domains of vocation.

Table 3: Three Domains of Vocations

[31] An alternative definition of vocation (in general) is this: A vocation is the change that comes out of a response to a call, which contributes to a person's flourishing according to the nature of the person. A religious-based definition of vocation has been offered by John Paul II (1996).

[32] Wojtyła (2013) discusses vocation in large sense in his book, *Love and responsibility* (pp. 245-261).

[33] The neo-Platonic dictum "Goodness is diffusive of itself" is attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius and cited by Aquinas (1273/1981, I-II, 94.2; I, 19.2).

[34] In the Catholic Christian understanding of marriage as a sacrament, this calling-response-change involves that "the two become one flesh," in a Christian narrative. Jesus Christ, in Matthew 19, affirms that God intended this type of self-gift commitment and communion in marriage.

Universal Call to Goodness and Holiness	Vocational States	A Person's Life Work
each person is called to a general and universal calling to a flourishing life through seeking to instantiate basic goodness	*each person is called to honor his or her vowed or non-vowed vocational relationships and intentional commitment* *e.g. Single, Married, Consecrated, Ordained*	*each person is called to self-giving work, devoted service, and re-creative and meaningful leisure*

One: each person is called to live a flourishing life through seeking to instantiate basic goodness. At both everyday and transcendent levels, there is the call from and response to the goodness that is found in justice (and holiness), truth and existence, relationship, and beauty, each in a unique way. In sum, everyone is called to a flourishing life, although in unique ways.
Two: each person is called to honor his or her vowed or non-vowed vocational relationships and intentional commitments, be the person single, married, raising a family, consecrated, or ordained.
Three: each person is called to self-giving work, devoted service, and re-creative and meaningful leisure.
What are the benefits to recognizing the three domains of a person's life callings and the vocational perspective? A vocational perspective requires attention to a person's developmental, personal, and spiritual life narratives. The life journey, with its purposes, meanings, and missions, starts with the gift of life; it is called forward toward goodness; and it grows in response to these three types of good: basic goodness, vocational states, and work and meaningful leisure.
For example, a fuller understanding of trauma (and PTSD) and its treatment comes when the trauma is put in the context of its impact on a person's vocational relationships. Trauma can affect a woman's relationships as wife to her husband, as mother to her children, as colleague to her work associates, and in her life of prayer. Without reference to her vocations (wife, mother, worker, person of faith), we will not fully understand the impact of the trauma on her and on the people with whom she is in relation. Furthermore, without reference to her vocations (interpersonal relationships), we will not fully understand the nature and proximity of vocational resources that will help her face the trauma with resilience.

d. A vocation-virtue tandem as an environment for mental health practice.

I employ the metaphor of the vocation-virtue tandem to identify how virtue and flourishing are realized in the context of vocations, and how vocations, in turn, require virtues for their realization. Both vocations and virtues are teleological and purposeful. They both aim at a person's objective wellbeing and a flourishing life. They work together, vocations requiring development of dispositions to virtue and virtues requiring the actualization of the vocations. Both vocations and virtues are responses to intrinsic goods that invite the person to encounter, serve, and enter into communion and friendship with others. Moreover, natural inclinations

toward goodness, truth, existence, relationship, and beauty are the seeds of the virtues,[35] as well as being the seeds of the vocations.

In an existential way, certain vocations are more foundational than the virtues. There are vocational states that are given by birth, such as The foundational vocation of being a parent to a child, a child to a parent, and siblings to each other. However, such familial relationships require further responses and development (transformation) for the vocation and related virtues to grow in a positive way.

There are however, many other vocations that are intentional from the start. Marriage and friendships, as well as vocational states of being ordained or consecrated religious, are intentional. They don't just happen. Some of them are vowed and others are non-vowed. Nonetheless, they all are responses to calls that through choice and commitment transform the person and his or her relationships.

What is common is that the virtues are founded in vocations, while the vocations find expression in the virtues.[36] There is a need to consider both equally in order to understand the person and to establish practices for growth and healing. In a vocation-virtue tandem, vocations and virtues are interconnected and become manifest through practical reason, free choice, and concrete practices. For instance, there is an interconnection of the mental health practitioner's virtues and vocations. His or her caring, just, and competent practices are possible through virtues such as practical wisdom, justice, and caring, which are shaped because of a mental health clinician's vocation to engage the client with therapeutic empathy, acceptance, and bonding.

As may be clear, I am working on a classic notion of the connection of the virtues, following Aristotle and Aquinas.[37] They both hold that practical reason tends toward flourishing through an interconnection of the virtues with each other. The interconnection of the virtues is manifest in the human desire for a wholeness that is possible only through the contributions of a whole range of the virtues. I find that their arguments are compelling, as they integrate rational normativity and teleology, as well as moral development and the importance of the transformation of the moral agent.[38] An act is morally good because of the whole action. What a person does is good and fitting (a) when the intention of the agent is morally good in seeking to attain a good end (through the virtue of discerning) and (b) when what is done is a morally good means to that end (through the virtue of practical reason).[39]

Aquinas's conception of grace and the virtue of charity, though, leads him to find a fuller type of connection of the virtues as well. While the moral virtue of practical reason leads a person toward a life of the connection of the moral virtues, which can be "naturally true," charity leads toward "simply true" virtues that connect with the other virtues even as they extend them not only by a new motivation but also by new types of virtue, such as the virtue of temperance,

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[35] Aquinas argues that the natural inclinations are the "seeds of the virtues" (1273/1981, I-II, 51.1; cf. I-II, 63.1). The basic inclinations are rooted in the inclination to flourishing and the good. They are deployed in the tendencies to (a) being, existence, and survival; (b) loving attachments, spousal relationships, family life, and society; (c) truth about the self, world, and God; and (e) beauty. See Aquinas 1273/1981, I-II, 94.2; MacIntyre, 1999. On the transcendentals including relationship (*aliquid*) and beauty (*pulchrum*), see K. L. Schmitz, (2007).

[36] See Titus, Nordling, and Vitz, 2020. Chapter 10, p. 211.

[37] See Aquinas (1273/1981, I-II 65.1-2.

[38] See Titus (2010).

[39] Of course, the circumstances need to be morally fitting to the whole agent and the good end, as well.

which includes religiously inspired practices of fasting and self-discipline.[40] In this Christian perspective, a simply true virtue is one that is perfect (perfectly good) in its being ordered to the ultimate and principal good of enjoying God by charity.[41]

But there are two sorts of "generically good" virtues or acts. One is ordered to some particular good that is only an "apparent good" and imperfectly connected. An apparent good is only partially good, such as the so-called courageous burglar or adulterer, who can control his fear of being caught but puts this capacity to a bad purpose. Such a moral act is called a simply imperfectly connected "virtue."[42] Of course, this understanding of the connection of the virtues is a challenging position, when a tendency toward inconsistency is found in an otherwise whole and virtuous person.[43] By contrast, the other type of act is really good and could be ordered to charity, as is the case with righteous anger, justice, or temperance.

e. How do vocations and virtues need each other to grow?

Finally, how do vocations and virtues work together? The Meta-Model provides a framework to understand how interrelated vocation-based and virtue-based practices lead (through development, growth, and healing) to flourishing. Of course, a larger notion of experience and objective wellbeing is needed, as well as of their contrary, namely, languishing.

Even without using the terms "virtue" or "vocation," mental health practitioners offer models and practices that promote virtue and vocation. For instance, mental health practitioners commonly encourage or facilitate a client in:

--not overreacting to the remarks of one's spouse (the virtue of moderation in a spousal relationship),

--holding fast to one's commitment to family during difficult times (perseverance in the family vocation),

--admitting the perspective of one's brother or sister (humility in the sibling vocation),

--thinking about the best way to help one's child, who is having difficulty at school (practical wisdom in the parental vocation),

--being fair to colleagues at work (justice in the work vocation), or

--expressing positive recognition to a neighbor (gratitude in the vocation to friendship).

These samples of the virtue-vocation tandem show that this tandem might be more present than at first imagined. They demonstrate that the work vocation of mental health practitioners involves encouraging the virtues (even all of them in due time) and the different domains of vocation (all of them, as well, in due course).

From the perspective of the Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person, this vocation-virtue tandem can include consideration of the impact of the virtues of faith, hope, and charity-love. These spiritual or theological virtues are especially appreciated when clients are in great need because of the loss of loved ones or because of the effects of depression or anxiety on a family. Faith offers meaning in suffering. Hope charges the difficult journey of life with confidence. And

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[40] Aquinas (1273/1981, ST, II-II 23.7), draws upon St. Paul (1 Cor. 13:3) and St. Augustine (*Against Julian*, iv.3) as authorities in his argument that holds that the virtue of charity tends toward the perfect and true virtue that is assured in its act by grace.

[41] Augustine would hold that an action should be thoroughly good, to be called fully and perfectly true. See also Aquinas, 1273/1981, ST, II-II 23.7.

[42] Aquinas, 1273/1981, ST II-II 23.7.

[43] On the notion of the flawed saint, see Jean Porter (1995) and my response, C. S. Titus (2010). If I had more space here, we could explore how this tendency toward wholeness serves in the active connection among the three major areas of vocation as well.

love's self-giving ties all the virtues together in a flourishing life. Although complete physical or mental wellness or lack of negative influences is not possible, inevitable suffering and sacrifice can take on new meaning when clients enter into the full range of their vocations and virtues, with the help of the therapist's care, by the reawakening of vocational commitments thanks to the support of family and friends, by providing service to others who are in need, and by recognizing God's love.

Conclusion

I have offered a conception of the person to aid understanding "the virtues and a flourishing life" in the context of mental health. I have focused on two considerations: First, that a worldview and value-system underlies every coherent presentation of the person, and an explicit focus on a Catholic Christian meta-model of the person offers benefits to clinical mental health practice, especially for self-identifying Catholic and Christian clients; and second, how vocations complement virtues and, in turn, how virtues complement vocations. The paper offers an example of how a vocation-virtue tandem and an explicitly recognized value-system enrich our understanding of the virtues and a flourishing life.

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Annexes

Table 1. CCMMP tripartite definition of the person
From a theological perspective, (Scripture, tradition, and the Magisterium), the human person is created in the image of God and made by and for divine and human love, and—although suffering the effects of original, personal, and social sin—is invited to divine redemption in Christ Jesus, sanctification through the Holy Spirit, and beatitude with God the Father.
From a philosophical perspective, the human person is an individual substance of a rational (intellectual), volitional (free), relational (interpersonal), sensory-perceptual cognitive (pre-rational knowledge), emotional, and unified (body-soul) nature; the person is called to flourishing, moral responsibility, and virtue through his or her vowed or non-vowed vocational state, as well as through life work, service, and meaningful leisure.
From a psychological perspective, the human person is an embodied individual who is intelligent, uses language, and exercises limited free-will. The person is fundamentally interpersonal, experiences and expresses emotions, and has sensory-perceptual-cognitive capacities to be in contact with reality. All of these characteristics are possible because of the unity of the body and unique self-consciousness, and are expressed in behavior and mental life. Furthermore the person is called by human nature to flourishing through virtuous behavior and transcendent growth; through interpersonal commitments to family, friends, and others; and through work, service, and meaningful leisure. From their origins (natural and transcendent), all persons have intrinsic goodness, dignity, and worth. In the course of life, though suffering from many natural, personal, and social disorders and conditions, persons hope for healing, meaning, and flourishing.

(Vitz, Nordling, Vitz, & Titus, 2020, p. 5)

Table 2. The Three-fold Structure of Vocation: Call-Response-Change	
Call	*encounter with and attraction to a good*
Response	*engagement with that good*
Change	*the transformation due to the communication with the good, often in terms of purpose and meaning and joy*

Table 3. Three Domains of Vocations		
Universal Call to Goodness and Holiness	Vocational States	A Person's Life Work
each person is called to a general and universal calling to a flourishing life through seeking to instantiate basic goodness	*each person is called to honor his or her vowed or non-vowed vocational relationships and intentional commitment e.g. Single, Married, Consecrated, Ordained*	*each person is called to self-giving work, devoted service, and re-creative and meaningful leisure*

Table 4. Characteristics of Thirteen Dimensions of Virtues and Vices

Virtue Dimensions	*Characteristics of Virtue*	*Vice Dimensions*
1. Performative (Act)	The free acts of virtue that are: a. involved in creating virtuous dispositions, and b. influenced by virtuous habits	**1. Deformative**, not performative (at the level of acts)
2. Perfective and corrective (Agent)	The strengths or dispositions of the virtuous person, which: a. are formed by virtuous acts and b. contribute to virtuous acts	**2. Defective**, not corrective or perfective (of the agent's character and flourishing)
3. Purposeful (Reason-based and teleological)	The virtue's good ends: a. that make the person flourish and b. at which virtues aim	**3. Negatively-purposeful**, not purposeful (indecisive and anti-communal)
4. Ethical (Moral norm-based)	The rational moral standards that the virtues employ	**4. Unethical or amoral**, not ethical (immorally teleological and egotistical)
5. Influenced by personal uniqueness, equal innate dignity, sex difference and complementarity	Based in personal individuality, including equal or common innate dignity, sex differences and complementarity	**5. Distortive of person and sex difference**, not influenced by personal uniqueness, equal innate dignity, sex difference and complementarity (exaggeration or denial of personal uniqueness; denial of equal dignity, sex differences, and complementarity)
6. Connective, relational, and developmental	Holistic, dynamic, and interpersonal process-based	**6. Disruptive**, not connective, relational, or dynamic (pseudo-holistic, fixated, or neglectful of personal relationships)
7. Learned through role-models	Based in exemplars and sources that model goodness and truth	**7. Learned through disordered role models**, following exemplars that model real evil and only apparent goods (preventing the influence of exemplars that model true good)
8. Moderating (Measured)	Seeking a middle ground of excellence between two extremes	**8. Extreme**, not moderating (conformed to an erroneous, weak, or extreme measure)
9. Preventative (Strength-based)	The virtue-based character and interpersonal strengths that face ills and vices	**9. Degenerative and disintegrative**, not preventative (not strength-based)

10. Nonreductionist (Contextual)	Contextual and open to evidence, including from scientific, evidence-based, value-based, and truth-seeking sources	**10. Reductionist**, not holistic (missing the greater and higher evidence for understanding virtue)
11. Applied (Research and practice)	Applications of virtue-based theory and practices to mental health and other disciplines enhance flourishing	**11. Misapplied,** disordered application of apparent goods in everyday and professional contexts distort flourishing
12. Vocational (Calling-based)	Informed by the callings: to goodness and holiness; to single, married, religious, or ordained life; and to work that underlies the virtues	**12. Anti-vocational** (not committing to personal goodness and holiness, vocational states, and work)
13. Open to the transcendent and to God	Seeking goodness, truth, and beauty and their first transcendent source (God), which transforms the virtues	**13. Non-transcendent**, closed to the transcendent and to God (not seeking, but avoiding higher goodness, truth, and beauty and their transcendent source)

(Titus, Vitz, Nordling, McWhorter, & Gross, 2020, pp. 644-645)