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Investing in Morality

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INVESTING IN MORALITY

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I. INTRODUCTION

In his 1990 book, *Ethics after Babel*, the philosopher and atheist, Jeffrey Stout made the following comment about the contributions of modern theologians to contemporary ethical discourse:

> To gain a hearing in our culture, theology has often assumed a voice not its own and found itself merely repeating the bromides of secular intellectuals in transparently figurative language . . .. The explanation for the eclipse of religious ethics in recent secular moral philosophy may therefore be . . . that academic theologians have increasingly given the impression of saying nothing that atheists don't already know.[1]

In other words, if Catholics do not have anything to say about contemporary issues that has not or cannot be articulated by secularists, then, as John Finnis notes, "no-one should be surprised to find the Church ceasing to be even an interesting participant in the secular debate, and faltering in its own primary and irreplaceable purpose of leading people to salvation."[2] It would be difficult to find a more decisive rebuttal to Harvey Cox's "secular city" agenda—a vision that even Cox has disowned as fundamentally misconceived. When it comes, then, to questions as complex and profound as the morality of investment choices, Catholics wishing to contribute to such discussions ought not to intimidated by secularist claims or wary of offering reflections to others that are developed from within Catholic moral thought, and even more specifically, the defined moral teaching of the Catholic Church. The purpose of this paper is therefore to examine the phenomenon of what is called "ethical investment" or sometimes "socially responsible investment" from this standpoint, and then to outline a basic framework for how Catholics and all people of good will may avoid evil when making their investment choices.

II. THE RISE OF "ETHICAL INVESTMENT"

Over the past 30 years, corporate life has become replete with ethical phraseology. Words such as "social responsibility," "business ethics," and "triple bottom line" are now commonplace in MBA classes, corporate boardrooms, and shareholder meetings. This phenomenon is not limited to the business world. Individual and institutional investors regularly hear themselves

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[1] Jeffrey Stout, ETHICS AFTER BABEL: LANGUAGE OF MORALS AND THEIR DISCONTENTS 110 (Boston, Beacon Press 1990).

[2] *See* John Finnis, The Catholic Church and Public Policy Debates in Western Liberal Societies: The Basis and Limits of Intellectual Engagement, Linacre Conference in Cambridge (August 1997). For a revised published version of this paper, *see* 73 NOTRE DAME L. REV. 492-515 (1997).

exhorted, often by religious groups, to invest "ethically" or in a "socially responsible" manner. Not coincidentally, these exhortations have accompanied an expansion of what are called "socially responsible" or "ethical investment" funds. Proponents of these funds claim that they allow people to invest in businesses that are "ethical"—that is, in businesses that avoid certain types of activity while rigorously promoting others.

In many respects, this attention to the morality of investment choices should be welcomed. The Catholic Church has always taught that our free choices for the good contribute to our integral fulfillment as persons and even to our salvation. Conversely, when we choose things that are not good, we foster our moral disintegration, and may even, in some cases, risk eternally separating ourselves from God. Pope John Paul II himself reminds us in his 1991 social encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, that the choice to invest in one area rather than another "is always *a moral and cultural choice*."[3]

But a difficulty for Catholics—indeed, for anyone seriously concerned with the moral life—is that for all the emphasis on social responsibility sweeping the financial world, many ethical investment strategies reflect the general moral incoherence associated with what the jurist Robert P. George poignantly describes as "orthodox secularism."[4] Broadly speaking, orthodox secularism involves fundamental rejection of Judeo-Christian teaching about the origins of the cosmos, the nature of man and the mystery of the moral life. As described by George, orthodox secularism relies upon a distinct and highly debatable set of moral and metaphysical propositions concerning the relationship of consciousness to bodiliness, of reason to desire, and the possibility of free choice. Secularist doctrine also contains very contentious views about what constitutes a person—views just as controversial as the Jewish and Christian outlook. The pervasiveness of orthodox secularist thinking throughout many Western societies, much of the academy, and even among some Catholics makes it all the more urgent for Catholic scholars to apply the Church's moral teaching to the question of investment in the conditions of a free economy, instead of producing pale imitations of the almost-always implicitly utilitarian approaches that appear to characterize the ideas of most self-described business ethicists.

III. THE AMERICAN BISHOPS

In terms of authoritative teaching, those charged with the responsibility of exercising the Church's Magisterium have said relatively little about ethical investment per se in their capacity of those who possess teaching authority. One exception has been the U.S. Catholic bishops. This is hardly surprising, given that the American bishops and/or their conference staff managed to comment upon just about every subject imaginable throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. In the midst of this feverish public policy analysis, the bishops issued a statement titled *Socially Responsible Investing* in November 1991.

Wisely, the document avoided lengthy reflection on the moral status of specific types of investment. Instead, it focused on the investment of Church-owned stock and other resources while outlining maxims that are applicable to all investment choices. The "principle of cooperation" was, for example, mentioned several times throughout *Socially Responsible*

3 *See* John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus* para. 36 (1991).
4 *See* Robert P. George, *A Clash of Orthodoxies*, 95 FIRST THINGS 33-40 (1999).

Investing.[5] By this, the bishops were presumably referring to the classic Catholic distinction between material and formal cooperation in evil. Unfortunately, *Socially Responsible Investing* did not elaborate on this difference in any significant detail. This was unfortunate, as it was a lost opportunity for the bishops to illustrate how this centuries-old principle of Catholic moral teaching is *central* to helping us resolve genuine moral dilemmas regularly encountered in contemporary commercial life.

But more worrying than this omission were the bishops' suggestions about how corporate activities might be morally assessed in the future. A vague reference, for instance, was made to "networks of others who share similar concerns" as well as "the publications of groups that offer research, advice and assistance in the area of corporate responsibility."[6] Underlying these words was an implicit assumption that Catholics may have something to learn from secular approaches to ethical investment. Unfortunately, close attention to the details of many such secular perspectives tends, rather, to demonstrate the validity of Germain Grisez's warning about such investment schemes. "As in other aspects of investing, one should not be too trusting in this matter, for while certain ethical investment vehicles are advertised as 'socially responsible,' the notion of socially responsible here may not reflect a judgment conformed to Christian principles."[7]

IV. "VALUES-TALK" OR VIRTUE

What should especially concern anyone who wants to do good and avoid evil in his investment decisions are the philosophically problematic premises that appear to underlie many ethical investment schemes. The first concerns their acquiescence in and promotion of a relativistic approach to morality. This is most apparent in the language pervading much ethical investment thinking. David Skinner, author of THE ETHICAL INVESTOR, states, for example, that "[d]ifferent people have different interests and concerns, different ideas and different values."[8] Skinner believes that the point of investing is to match your values with an appropriate mutual fund.

This is just one manifestation of the "values-talk" that permeates contemporary public and ethical discourse. The word "value" was once used as a verb, meaning "to esteem." Now it is used primarily as a noun, to denote beliefs. People speak of "my values," while others have "their values." Certainly, the word "values" has been used by Catholic scholars as a synonym for "virtues," "basic moral goods," or what John Paul II's 1993 encyclical on the Church's moral teaching, *Veritatis Splendor*, describes as "fundamental goods."[9] But the secularist values-talk pervading many ethical investment schemes reflects the truth of Elizabeth Anscombe's insight concerning modern moral philosophy's inability to give a substantive moral account of

[5] U.S. Catholic Bishops, Statement on Socially Responsible Investing (Nov. 1991), *at* http://www.osjspm.org/sri-uscc.htm.
[6] *See id.*
[7] *See* Germain, Grisez, 2 THE WAY OF THE LORD JESUS, LIVING A CHRISTIAN LIFE 817 (Quincy, Franciscan Press 1993).
[8] *See* David Skinner, THE ETHICAL INVESTOR 29 (London, Penguin 2001).
[9] *See, e.g.,* John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Veritatis Splendor* para. 48 (1993).

anything,[10] precisely because values-talk rejects the existence of a single authoritative source of moral goodness.

The statement "I have values" is often used to indicate that "I am essentially good." Such statements are, however, meaningless unless you can discern what those "values" happen to be. But a values-talk culture discourages people from assessing the worth of those beliefs, because it implies that the only important factor is that a person has chosen them. Questioning the correctness of someone's moral choice is widely judged (in our nonjudgmental age) to be wrong, because such questioning implies that some beliefs are "not as good" as others, or may indeed be positively evil. Put another way, a discussion of good and evil is central to any serious reflection on morality, but values-talk eschews this in favor of a type of relativistic moral leveling.

This becomes clear when we contrast values-talk with Aristotle's classic virtue-based ethics. The Aristotelian tradition, which resonates deeply with Catholic moral teaching, holds that the virtues are, by definition, not only limited in number but transcend time, place, and culture in their normative-ness. Hence, you cannot hold that the habit of courage is a virtue for one person but not for another. Likewise, both Aristotelian thought and Catholic moral teaching insist that prudence is a moral habit that may be acquired by someone who possesses right reason, and is always, but definition, superior to the vice of foolish reasoning.

Values-talk is therefore a telling example of the extent to which what the Aristotelian-Thomist philosopher, Alasdair MacIntyre, calls "emotivism", has permeated so much contemporary moral discourse. Emotivism is a "doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically moral judgments are nothing but the expression of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character."[11] "It also holds that There are and can be no valid rational justification for any claims that objective and impersonal moral standards exist and hence that there are no such standards."[12]

If MacIntyre is right, and if it is true that many ethical investment funds are essentially underpinned by emotivist tendencies that disguise powerful conflicts, arbitrary decisions, and a primacy of feelings over right reason, then the idea of ethical investment is surely in need of serious redemption. Throughout the ages, the Catholic Church has unambiguously affirmed that there is objective moral truth, and that man can know this truth, both through right reason as well as the Divine Revelation encapsulated in the Person of Jesus Christ and the teaching of his Church. It follows that perhaps one of the more important contributions that Catholic theologians and philosophers can make to thinking about morality and investment, is to employ this knowledge of the truth to highlight instances of emotivist incoherence in ethical investment schemes, as well as to outline a path towards morally-sound investment decision-making that meets all the demands of right reason. This need not, of course, be perceived simply as a service to Catholics. For it is surely the case that Catholic thinkers would render a service to all by alerting believers and non-believers to the emotivist dimension of much ethical investment thinking, and to demonstrate that, if one is seriously concerned with doing good and avoiding

[10] *See* G.E.M. Anscombe, Modern Moral Philosophy, 33 PHILOSOPHY 11 (1958).
[11] *See* Alasdair MacIntyre, AFTER VIRTUE: A STUDY IN MORAL THEORY 11 (London, Duckworth 1981).
[12] *See id.* at 18.

evil, it is simply not adequate to rely, often unconsciously, upon a *mélange* of concepts and ideas randomly cobbled together from a variety of rival traditions.

V. THE PROBLEM OF ARBITRARINESS

Given the extent to which some ethical investment groups use the language of values-talk, it is reasonable to suggest that Catholics should be wary of these organizations' basic understanding of the moral life. The problems with their views of the good life are underlined by the sheer arbitrariness that characterizes the priorities of some ethical investment associations.

The list of concerns promoted by many ethical investment funds is, for example, long and not especially coherent.[13] Many such funds generally refrain, for example, from investing in businesses directly (and sometimes indirectly) involved in armaments, tobacco, gambling, pornography, product-testing involving animal experimentation, inhumane farming, nuclear fission, and countries with oppressive regimes. The same funds often try to avoid investing in corporations that do not have affirmative action programs. Equally reprehensible, according to many socially responsible investment guidelines, are corporations insufficiently involved in, or committed to, what is termed "adequate community involvement."

Careful reflection on such statements should immediately raise some problems. What, for example, constitutes "inadequate" community involvement? Moreover, one should hesitate before describing the manufacturing of all forms of armaments as wrong in itself. Weapons can be used, as we know, to defend victims of military aggression. Indeed, the Catholic Church's teaching on just war unquestionably permits nations to defend themselves, provided that certain criteria are met in the manner in which that defense is conducted.[14]

One may further suggest that scrutiny of the standard list of concerns highlighted by many ethical investment funds indicates that many of these socially responsible criteria have more to do with fashionable causes than with the objective moral life. Apart from pornography, ethical investment funds usually reflect little interest in questions of sexual morality. Ethical investment funds rarely cater to those who believe that marriage is a basic good, that adultery is always wrong, or that intentional abortion, or formal cooperation in intentional abortion, is a mortal sin.

In short, a high degree of moral selectivity appears to characterize the interests of many ethical investment organizations. Political selectivity is also evident. In the 1980s, for example, ethical investment funds invariably listed South Africa as a country to shun.[15] In prudential terms, this policy had much to recommend it. One is bound to wonder, however, why it appears to have been rare for the same funds to list other countries with at least equally oppressive regimes, such as Cuba, East Germany, Iraq, Zaire, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Vietnam.

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[13] For a careful study of the criteria that characterizes many ethical investment funds, *see* Digby Anderson, WHAT HAS "ETHICAL INVESTMENT" TO DO WITH ETHICS? RESEARCH REPORT NO.26 17-19 (London, Social Affairs Unit 1996).

[14] *See Catechism of the Catholic Church* para. 2309 (1994).

[15] *See, e.g.,* Scottish Equitable Fund Managers Ltd., *Prospectus 1984*; Scottish Equitable Fund Managers Ltd., *Prospectus 1986;* Scottish Equitable Fund Managers Ltd., *Prospectus 1988.*

Many of the moral criteria employed by some ethical investment funds also reflect an unreasonably narrow judgmental scope in the manner in which they circumscribe the room for prudential judgment that, for example, the Catholic Church recognizes to be applicable to most public policy issues.[16] There are few people, for example, who would regard racial discrimination as good. But one does not have to be a racist to object to affirmative action programs. Many perfectly orthodox Catholic thinkers have carefully argued that affirmative action policies may, in fact, be morally problematic because they consider such programs to violate particular principles of justice. It is therefore highly contentious to imply, as many ethical investment funds do, that a corporation that does not engage in affirmative action is acting unethically. In certain respects, the U.S. bishops appear to have made this error of judgment in 1991. By listing corporate promotion of affirmative action programs as an example of "social responsibility,"[17] the bishops appear to have confused support of the sound principle of opposition to racial discrimination with the promotion of a controversial policy about which Catholics are largely free to make their own prudential judgments.

There is also a tendency for some ethical investment funds to use the words "ethical" and "environmental" as if they were synonymous. Apart from the obvious problem of automatically associating morally-sound propositions with the claims of anyone describing himself as an environmentalist by virtue of the fact that he is an environmentalist, there is surely room for prudential judgment here. A genuine ethical question, for example, arises over the use of animals for testing various products.[18] But should we test these products on humans instead? Or should we permit people to use the products without testing them at all?

Even more questionable is the fact that some ethical investment groups list "disclosure of information" to the groups themselves as a moral criterion against which corporations should be assessed.[19] Yet there are many good moral reasons why a corporation may choose not to disclose such information. This may include, for example, its preexisting duties to maintain confidences. Corporations may also reasonably conclude that the survey questions on disclosure forms are poorly framed, that their underlying assumptions are unsubstantiated, or that the ethical categories chosen have more to do with particular political causes than a concern for the objective truth about good and evil discernible by what St. Thomas Aquinas called right reason. In such instances, it may even be unethical for corporations to respond to such surveys. Whatever the circumstances, labeling a company as unethical because it refuses to complete an unsolicited form is clearly questionable.

It would seem, then, that investing in many self-described ethical investment funds is no guarantee that the investment will be a morally sound act. Many such funds do appear to have embraced a somewhat crude, sometimes inadequate, and often erroneous understanding of the nature of the moral life. One hastens to add, of course, that if some people want to further particular causes through encouraging us to invest in particular ways, there is little to prevent

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[16] *See* Samuel Gregg, MORALITY, LAW, AND PUBLIC POLICY 49-65 (Sydney, St. Thomas More Publications 2001).

[17] *See* U.S. Catholic Bishops, *supra* note 5.

[18] *See* Grisez, *supra* note 7, at 785-87.

[19] For a sample of such questionnaires, *see* Anderson, WHAT HAS "ETHICAL INVESTMENT" TO DO WITH ETHICS? apps.VI-VIII.

them from doing so. But one may legitimately protest their appropriation of the word "ethical" to describe such the nature and ends of such investments.

VI. TOWARDS A CATHOLIC INVESTMENT ETHIC

If, then, profound difficulties exist with the basic coherence of the thinking underlying many ethical investment funds and their way of proceeding, how should Catholics think through the moral character of the range of investment possibilities that confront us? The answer, it seems, would lie in people revisiting some of the most basic principles of the moral teaching proclaimed by the Church, so that Catholics can adequately inform their consciences in the light of that truth as well as their act of faith, as a Catholic, that what the Catholic Church teaches on matters of faith and morals is true. As noted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "A good and pure conscience is enlightened by *true* faith."[20] But by faith, the Catholic Church does not have in mind a subjective faith: that is, one that locates the criterion of belief in one's own inward experience or "feelings". Rather, it means faith in Jesus Christ and the reception of God's Revelation by the Apostles and its transmission through history by the body of the Catholic Church, the body gathered about and led by the successors of the Apostles as provided for by Jesus Christ.

In the Catholic conception of faith, one's personal faith is *only* a fully adequate and appropriate response to God's grace when it is a sharing in the faith of the Church, a faith that is a reception of a Divine Revelation completed by the historical words and acts of Jesus and a transmission of what God thus entrusted to the community of the Apostles who had thus received Him in faith. Hence, any appeal to the *sensus fidei* should be, as John Finnis reminds us, to the *true sensus* and *consensus fidelium*: that is, the judgement of many generations of Catholics before us, captured in the writings of saints and doctors, and guarded and expounded by the papal and conciliar Magisterium.[21]

Catholicism does not hold that conscience is an independent and infallible faculty. A *good* and *right* conscience for Catholics not only presupposes the uprightness of the will in pursuit of the true good, but also true faith in God's Word and the Church instituted by Christ and respect for—and even obedience to—its divinely ordained Magisterium on matters of faith and morals. Our act of faith as Catholics involves submitting our judgement to the living authority of the Church. Why else would the *Catechism*'s teaching about conscience list "rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching" as "one of the sources of error in moral conduct"?[22]

The moral principles that should inform and direct our investment choices are no different from those that should inform and direct our other choices. Apart from helping us to participate in the fundamental goods, our investments should be directed by maxims such as the

[20] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *supra* note 14, at para. 1794 (emphasis added). *See* John Paul II, *supra* note 9, at para. 64. Veritatis *Splendor* grounds the establishment of a good and right conscience in "the virtuous attitudes of the individual . . . prudence and the other cardinal virtues, and even before these the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity." *See id.*
[21] *See* John Finnis, *Thomas More and the Crisis in Faith and Morals* 8 (1989) (unpublished paper on file with author). For elaboration on this point, *see* Gregg, *supra* note 16, at 36-48.
[22] *See Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *supra* note 14, at para. 1792.

Pauline principle (one should not do evil even if good may come of it) and the Golden Rule (do to others as you would have them do to you). Catholics should also know, however, that the Church has declared that certain acts are always wrong. Intentions may be noble, people may claim to be acting in good conscience, and circumstances may mitigate personal responsibility. Nonetheless, certain acts (e.g., adultery, intentional killing of human life) are *always* evil. The negative moral precepts of the Church's teaching, as *Veritatis Splendor* reminds us, do *not* allow for legitimate exception.[23]

An appropriate starting point for developing an authentically Catholic investment ethic may therefore be to focus on how to avoid evil when making investment choices. This is especially prudent in light of the fact that, as the American Bishops correctly stated in *Socially Responsible Investing*, "given the realities of mergers, buyouts and conglomeration . . . it is increasingly likely that most investments will be in companies whose policies or products make the holding of their stock a 'mixed investment'."[24] Most corporations are likely to be associated in some way, however remote, with activities or policies that conflict with right reason.

The issue, however, is not whether we should attempt to "weigh" the respective consequences of investing, for example, in a corporation that financially contributes to abortion providers, as opposed to a company engaged in embryonic stem cell research. This is the irrational approach typically advocated by consequentialists and other utilitarians,[25] an approach explicitly condemned as such by John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor.*[26] Rather, the reality of mixed investments forces us to ask whether our investment will amount to a formal or a material cooperation in evil. We should reflect on this distinction before considering whether our investment in, or withdrawal from, a business will foster positive changes in a corporation's policies or activities. In any case, the latter are generally a matter for prudential judgment.

Formal cooperation in another's evil act is, the Church teaches, always wrong. This occurs when the person cooperating intends to help the other do what is wrong. Anyone who directs, encourages, approves, commands, or actively defends another's immoral act formally cooperates in that immoral act. Material cooperation, by contrast, means making it possible for another person to commit an evil act without intending the evil ourselves. In other words, we do not intend but rather merely foresee the connection between what we do and the wrongful act.[27] We bear some responsibility for the other person's evil deeds and we must consider whether we are justified in accepting the evil side effects.

[23] *See* John Paul II, *supra* note 9, at para. 52. "The negative precepts of the natural law are universally valid. They oblige each and every individual, always and in each circumstance. . . . the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances . . . The Church has always taught that one may never choose kinds of behavior prohibited by the moral commandments expressed in negative form in the Old and New Testaments." *Id. See also* John Paul II, *supra* note 14, at para. 75.

[24] U.S. Catholic Bishops, *supra* note 5.

[25] For a considered critique of consequentialism, *see* John Finnis, FUNDAMENTALS OF ETHICS 86-94 (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press 1983).

[26] *See* John Paul II, *supra* note 9, at paras. 74-80.

[27] To know an act with the intellect is not necessarily to intend that same act as a good with the will. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q.12.

Though this formal/material distinction appears complicated, it does help us to determine what is the correct moral choice when faced with options of different investments. Formal cooperation would occur, for instance, if a shareholder intended his investment to facilitate the prosperity of a company that he knew was using slave labor in order to cut costs. Such cooperation is immoral, even though the shareholder may not personally force anyone to work for him without pay.

Material cooperation, on the other hand, may sometimes be acceptable, although only in limited circumstances. If it involves very close cooperation, it can be objectionable. An example would be a major shareholder whose regular failure to vote at shareholder meetings allows the directors of the company to uphold an unspoken policy of bribing corrupt officials in a developing nation. This would convey the strong impression that the shareholder agrees with, or does not strongly disagree with, the evil being done, and thus give rise to what we call scandal.

Other kinds of material cooperation might be less culpable. One example might be an investor who places money into a mutual fund that, in turn, invests a small amount of its resources in a corporation with a subsidiary that owns a small number of stocks in a consortium that is attempting, among other things, to clone a human being. The evil of such cooperation by the investor might be so remote from his choice to invest that it could be seen as unproblematic. But the same investor might also rule out such an investment by deciding that his refusal to invest in the fund would be an effective witness against the consortium's evil activity.

So how do we establish whether cooperation in such cases is morally justified? In simple terms, we need to compare the reasons for cooperating to those for not cooperating. Refusal to cooperate might, for example, perversely result in weakening internal company opposition to the efforts of those who want to donate corporate funds to a range of immoral causes. On the other hand, materially cooperating—even remotely—in a company's immoral policies might contribute to our own moral disintegration. It might make us less sensitive to the wrongs of such policies. We might even become inclined to cooperate with evil acts more closely, perhaps even formally, in the future. Our cooperation might also tempt others who might perceive that the wrong is not so very evil in our eyes.

The greater the risk of corrupting ourselves, or of giving others the impression that we have no strong objection to an evil policy or activity, the more serious the reason for refraining from investing in organizations that engage in such activities. Sometimes it is possible for investors to avoid cooperation relatively easily by directing their money to companies involved in less problematic projects. If the same good can be done by investing in Company A, which does not involve any cooperation in evil, as by investing in Company B, which does, then a compelling reason exists to invest in Company A.

VII. AVOID EVIL . . . BUT ALSO DO GOOD

Clearly, reflecting on the intricacies of formal versus material cooperation in evil is important when considering investment choices. The situation is, however, further complicated by the fact that, as Grisez observes, "[a]n individual's responsibility is limited by his or her ability to know about alternative possibilities and to choose reasonably among them."[28] This insight is especially pertinent to the investment world, since it is impossible to know everything about every potential investment available in the world's free and rapidly globalizing economies.

But before we see this reality of the limitations on our knowledge as relieving us from too much concern about the morality or otherwise of our investment choices, there are two additional points that we ought to keep in mind. Right reason suggests—and the Catholic Church teaches—that moral responsibility for what we invest in ultimately flows from what we formally choose and accept. When our investment helps others to do wrong, we are morally responsible. Hence, when it comes to investments, Catholics should remember that the maxim "Let the buyer beware" involves more than just protecting ourselves against fraud. It also concerns the moral health of our souls.

Last of all, we need to remember that our investment decisions, like all our moral choices, ought to seek to *do good* as well as avoid evil. Certainly, it must be acknowledged that while we can always choose *not to act intentionally against* the basic goods that are at the core of human flourishing, choosing the good can be a more difficult exercise. The reality of mixed investment means, of course, that the moral reflection that should precede our investment choices will be necessarily orientated towards reasoning our way through the intricacies of formal and material cooperation in evil. Nevertheless, the possibility of engaging in human flourishing needs to be considered after we are reasonably sure that our act will avoid any formal choice of evil. Indeed, given the many potential choices for the good that exist for us in most circumstances, the possibilities of doing so via our investment decisions are interesting to contemplate. But that is a subject for another paper.

[28] *See* Grisez, *supra* note 7, at 817.