There are many different ways of theorizing about moral philosophy and each has its advantages and disadvantages. In the ancient world Aristotle presented a virtue ethics, an ideal of human happiness to be attained by the practice of the appropriate moral and intellectual virtues and avoiding the extremes of vice. Later the emphasis shifted to a natural law approach, classifying good human behavior in terms of general descriptions of human actions in various situations which were deemed lawful and therefore moral and those that were deemed unlawful and therefore immoral. The modern period has thrown up systems of moral philosophy based on sentiment, based on moral obligation, based on reason, based on consequences. The modern period has also produced strong arguments against any universal moral philosophy such as situation ethics, existentialist positions, relativism and deconstruction.

What do we do in the face of such a variety of approaches? My approach is firstly to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each of these systems of moral philosophy. It is not simply a question of totally rejecting or accepting each approach but rather of recovering the genuine contributions that each approach offers. We are then in a position to formulate the foundations of moral philosophy which I articulate in terms of a value ethics.

Everyone talks about values these days but nobody seems to know what a value is and how we might be expected to make true and good value judgments. My approach would be to examine the components of the judgment of value: the intellectual, the affective, the volitional and the developmental in order to be able to make authentic moral judgments and carry them out in moral actions. These would be the foundations of any moral philosophy. Value ethics helps us to make good value judgments because of this heightened awareness of the components which enhance or distort the process.

The foundations of moral philosophy are to be found in the fact that to be an authentic human being is to be attentive, to be intelligent, to be reasonable, to be responsible and to be in love with the good. It is the nature of being human to act in such a manner. To do less than that is to be less than human. We learn the specific content of our morals from our parents and teachers. But the dynamism of being reasonable and responsible and in love is part of human nature.

Fortunately, we have an excellent textbook covering most of these topics: *Value Ethics: A Lonergan Perspective*, written by yours truly. We do not have to go into the Lonergan part too deeply but we can use the text as a mirror to read ourselves: to read our moral being and the decisions, the desires, the insights, the hopes and dreams, involved in the drama of becoming fully human. The course will be general rather than specific; it will not be giving particular answers to specific questions in business ethics, or medical ethics, or sexual ethics. It will be giving you the tools to work out for yourself the codes appropriate to each specific area.