What is Evil?

There are many theories about what “evil” is:

* Evil is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a real ‘thing’. Eg. Satan embodied in a person that exists, or
* Evil is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ reality. Eg. A force or power which produces negative effects
* Evil is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not a reality itself.
* Evil is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, with us being the source of evil because of our ability to make free choices. In this case, pain and suffering would not necessarily be considered ‘evils’.
* The Catholic view is that any one or combination of the above views is acceptable, as long as God is not held as the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and we believe in the capability of humans to make \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Original Sin: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Bible says that even the first humans acted selfishly and wrongly, and this was how evil first came into the world. Their lives affected others and so on. Jesus taught that only loving kindness can overcome this evil.

The Devil:

* It arises from a literal interpretation of Biblical passages.
* Is evidence of a human tendency to give human characteristics to spiritual realities (we have to try and understand things in context of what we know and can comprehend, eg. a devil dressed in red, carrying a pitchfork)
* In interpreting Biblical passages, it is important to consider the context in which it was written, while keeping the purpose and intent of a passage intact

Freedom of humans to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ good and evil is a basic part of Catholic faith.

Types of Evil:

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is that which a society recognizes or determines as a group. This may or may not coincide with what our consciences consider immoral. Immoral doesn’t necessarily mean illegal according to society and vice versa.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is beyond the scope and control of humans and results from the workings of nature and its laws or forces (eg, earthquake, cancer). These are seen as evils because of the pain and suffering caused.
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is personal conduct or intentions which are considered harmful. These may or may not be against the laws of society! It is also what we refer to as “sin”. For Christians it means acting in a way that contradicts Jesus’ teachings. It is the only type of sin which is humanly “harmful” as opposed to just being “hurtful or painful”. Whereas sometimes social and natural evils bring out the good in people (even though they cause pain and suffering), moral evil cannot.

Moral evil is:

* against one’s own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ conscience
* a freely chosen act \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to harm (ex. Firing a loaded gun with the intention of killing (even if it ends up that it is full of blanks) is a moral evil.

Pain and Suffering:

Pain is a physical sensation; suffering is emotional or psychological experience of pain or loss. Pain is sometimes good and acts as a warning. Suffering gives us room to grow in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and in our appreciation of love and goodness. Pain and suffering are not the same as evil, because good can result from them. But if there was no evil in the world, we would not be truly making free choices for good; we would be like pre-programmed robots.

Why does God allow suffering?

* Christian belief is that God allows it for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, like a parent allowing a child to learn for themselves, even if it is tough or painful.
* God doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pain or suffering or evil
* We have to learn to take things which are hurtful (like suffering) and prevent them from being harmful (like evil and sin)

Finally, when suffering and pain in the world seems excessive, we have to keep in mind that the one who was the most good and innocent suffered the most (Jesus). We pray in Jesus’ word, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and await the glory that is promised to us.

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There are many theories about what “evil” is:

* Evil is a reality, a real ‘thing’. Eg. Satan embodied in a person that exists, or
* Evil is a spiritual reality. Eg. A force or power which produces negative effects
* Evil is the absence of good, not a reality itself.
* Evil is a deliberate choice, with us being the source of evil because of our ability to make free choices. In this case, pain and suffering would not necessarily be considered ‘evils’.
* The Catholic view is that any one or combination of the above views is acceptable, as long as God is not held as the source of evil and we believe in the capability of humans to make free choices.

Original Sin: a tendency in humans to do wrong instead of good.

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* Moral evil is personal conduct or intentions which are considered harmful. These may or may not be against the laws of society! It is also what we refer to as “sin”. For Christians it means acting in a way that contradicts Jesus’ teachings. It is the only type of sin which is humanly “harmful” as opposed to just being “hurtful or painful”. Whereas sometimes social and natural evils bring out the good in people (even though they cause pain and suffering), moral evil cannot.

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