

What are the necessary conditions of the possibility of "the common good"?

Two things: (1) the flourishing or well-being of every individual in the community; and (2) the structures of order necessary thereto.

This answer assumes that the deeper need of any individual if it is to prosper or flourish is for an order permitting the optimal and meaningful exercise of its freedom to create both itself and others and thereby the whole. In the case of human individuals, the order needed includes the local order of human society and culture as well as the cosmic order of the universe as such. Therefore, the structures necessary to the common good of such individuals are also social and cultural, including structures of state and government.

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Gamwell speaks of "the common good" somewhere as "the substance of the public world—economic, cultural, associational—that each inherits." I would want to add—as he himself often says or implies—"and to which each is called to contribute." The point of the above reflection is that "the substance of the public world" includes both content and structure—both "the flourishing or well-being of every individual in the community" and "the structures of order necessary thereto."

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