

THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

MORAL CONSCIENCE

Biblical Reflection: 1 Jn 3:18-24

Moral conscience, present at the heart of the persons, enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil. It bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments. When he



listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. (CCC 1777)

Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator... (CCC 1783)

Man is sometimes confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult. But he must always seriously seek what is right and good and discern the will of God expressed in divine law. (CCC 1787)

Some rules apply in every case:

- ✓ One may never do evil so that good may result from it;
- ✓ the Golden Rule: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them,"
- ✓ Charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbor and his conscience: "Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience... you sin against Christ (1 Cor 8:12)." Therefore "it is right not to... do anything that makes your brother stumble" (Rom 14:21). (CCC 1789)

"Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; I mean that it was not a dictate, nor conveyed the notion or responsibility, of duty, of a threat and a promise... [Conscience] is a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ." John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Letter to the Duke of Norfolk". (CCC 1778)

Questions for discussion:

- **Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which its resolution implies both good and bad aspects? How have you resolved it?**
- **The economic and industrial progress many times is contrary to the environment, to the local communities, to other small businesses, etc.? What is the best answer to this problem?**
- **How do you think we could and must form our conscience? What steps shall we follow?**

Further reading: Catechism of the Catholic Church, numbers 1776-1802