

I. Our Need For Moral Truth: The Role Of Conscience, Free Choice, And Character. Although we have now just begun a new millennium, I think it is safe to say that while the "Christian conscience.

Catholic Teaching for a Strong Faith Understanding conscience is essential for the life of faith. A solid grasp of Catholic teaching about conscience makes it possible to live a moral life. And sadly a defective understanding can destroy your moral life. For the beginning Catholic, this is an essential issue to understand properly. This article will give you a brief, understandable description of conscience in plain English. A natural faculty to judge Conscience is a natural faculty of our reason that does three things: Reminds us always to do good and avoid evil. Makes a judgment about the good and evil of particular choices in a specific situation. Bears witness after the fact to the good or evil that we have done. Conscience is a powerful and remarkable faculty that is distinctly human. Understand that conscience is a judgment of reason. It uses the objective principles of the moral law to judge the morality of acts in specific circumstances. Conscience is not itself the source of the moral law. This is a common point of misunderstanding. Use the Catechism to defend this point. Everyone has a duty to form their conscience. Formation of conscience simply means educating and training it. We do this by learning and taking to heart the objective moral law, as found in Scripture and the authoritative teachings of the Catholic Church. This forms conscience in objective moral truth as taught by Christ and his Church. Practicing the virtues is another aspect of forming the conscience. This not only lets us do good acts, but it trains the will to desire to do good. In particular, the virtue of prudence affects the ability of conscience to judge rightly. You must follow your conscience A fundamental principle of Catholic morality is that you must follow your conscience. A well-formed conscience will never contradict the objective moral law, as taught by Christ and his Church. Catechism, , , A safe way to read this principle is: Otherwise, seek reliable guidance in forming your conscience. The principle that we must follow our conscience derives fromâ€ The dignity of conscience The authority of conscience, and our need to follow it, come from its dignity. Veritatis Splendor, , 60 Conscience is the means God has given us to make moral decisions. Our freedom demands that we use it: Jesus alludes to the danger of the conscience being deformed when he warns: So if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! Veritatis Splendor, 63 Erroneous judgment Conscience does not always judge properly. Out of ignorance or bad reasoning, it can judge wrongly. Erroneous judgment is often our own fault, and can have many causes from Catechism, This greatly hinders our ability to advance in the moral life and live in union with God. Only the act in conformity with the good can be a path that leads to lifeâ€. If [an act is not good]â€, the choice of that action makes our will and ourselves morally evil, thus putting us in conflict with our ultimate end, the supreme good, God himself. Veritatis Splendor, 72, emphasis in the original The key to the moral life The good or evil of specific acts shapes our whole life. We choose God or reject him specifically in the morality of our actions. Wonderful are his works. This article on conscience is just one of a series of articles about Catholic morality. This topic is also one of the common Catholic Questions. You can also check our home page for other articles about the Catholic faith!

Chapter 2 : Conscience: A Key To Salvation

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church Moral conscience,1 present at the heart of the person, enjoins him at the appropriate Forming conscience is a.

Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment. For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil. When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law: 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 of responsibility, of duty, of a threat and a promise. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ. This requirement of interiority is all the more necessary as life often distracts us from any reflection, self-examination or introspection: Return to your conscience, question it. Turn inward, brethren, and in everything you do, see God as your witness. Conscience includes the perception of the principles of morality synderesis ; their application in the given circumstances by practical discernment of reasons and goods; and finally judgment about concrete acts yet to be performed or already performed. The truth about the moral good, stated in the law of reason, is recognized practically and concretely by the prudent judgment of conscience. We call that man prudent who chooses in conformity with this judgment. If man commits evil, the just judgment of conscience can remain within him as the witness to the universal truth of the good, at the same time as the evil of his particular choice. The verdict of the judgment of conscience remains a pledge of hope and mercy. In attesting to the fault committed, it calls to mind the forgiveness that must be asked, the good that must still be practiced, and the virtue that must be constantly cultivated with the grace of God: Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters. 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. The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. The education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church. But he must always seriously seek what is right and good and discern the will of God expressed in divine law. If he were deliberately to act against it, he would condemn himself. Yet it can happen that moral conscience remains in ignorance and makes erroneous judgments about acts to be performed or already committed. This is the case when a man "takes little trouble to find out what is true and good, or when conscience is by degrees almost blinded through the habit of committing sin. It remains no less an evil, a privation, a disorder. One must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths" GS Everyone must avail himself of the means to form his conscience. Such ignorance and errors are not always free of guilt. We must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. This is how moral conscience is formed. Longmans Green, , Augustine, In ep Jo.

Chapter 3 : Making Good Choices with Conscience

Read Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States (en Espa ol), which provides a framework for Catholics in the United States.

White Catholic faith and current research in education and psychology are the basis for these key elements of character formation. We often see young people faced with pressures and temptations we never had to deal with when we were their age. As a Catholic child psychologist, I am frequently asked about how best to guide children and teens to live holy lives. The more they grow, the less we can make decisions for them; but we can help set them on the path to virtue. Here are Ten Commandments of Forming Catholic Conscience and Character, gleaned from our Catholic faith and from current research in education and psychology. Invite your learners to be their best selves. As Catholics, we believe that people are created good. We are created out of love, by a God who is love, for the purpose of loving God and others. Certainly this goodness can be clouded, but the divine spark still exists within all people, created as they are in the image and likeness of God. It is our work as Catholic educators to fan this spark into flame. Do you have a dream, a positive vision, for each of your students? Express your confidence that they really can become all God made them to be. Children and teens often do what we communicate that we expect of them, even if and sometimes especially if those expectations are low. You might find that they unexpectedly rise to the occasion. Teach morality as discipleship. Jesus showed us the way to live the lives we were made for. His life is the pattern for authentic humanity. Exposing your learners to the saints, our heroes of the faith, can also provide them with powerful examples. Our saints come from many backgrounds, places, and life situations, but all of them are recognized for the ways they followed Jesus. Research young saints who might be an inspiration to the children and teens in your group. Marketing experts tell us that children and teens are especially intrigued by young people who are just a little older than they are. This is why children who are probably just a little too old are used in commercials to market a toy targeted toward younger children. Remember the power of your own witness. Emmy Werner is known for her ambitious Hawaii Longitudinal Study which followed children from infancy until 40 years of age, examining what factors in their lives kept them on track to achievement, successful relationships, and positive behaviors at home, in school, and in the community. Never underestimate the lessons you teach by example. What experience do your learners have of you? Can they tell that you really mean what you say? Do they see you as a person who really knows Jesus? You teach not only by what you say, but also by what you do, both in the classroom and in the community. We teach a living faith that must be taken out into the world. Young people, especially children 12 and under, tend to be very concrete learners. They tend to learn best by experiencing the material with their senses. You can help make moral lessons more concrete by role-playing how to make good choices and practice positive behaviors, from ways of handling moral dilemmas to service activities that allow children and teens to participate in works of mercy towards others. Make it a community effort. A great deal of Catholic moral teaching, especially the social teaching of the Church, includes the idea of the common good. As Catholics, we consider the good of everyone when we make choices. Assist learners in forming, and being accountable to, a community. Reflect together with them on group guidelines that show respect for everyone and reflect what it means to live and work in Catholic community. Encourage them to hold themselves and others accountable for following those guidelines. And when someone is wronged, seek just solutions together. This requires learning to listen to one another and see situations from multiple perspectives—skills that will benefit your learners for the rest of their lives. Some aspects of moral formation will be further developed over time. We also want to be aware of and encourage other aspects of development that have an effect on moral behavior. For example, delay of gratification—the ability to put off something we want in the moment for the sake of something more important that will come later—is key in avoiding impulsive and often bad decisions. But delay of gratification grows over time in most people. Scientists who study the brain tell us that delay of gratification is highly influenced by the prefrontal cortex of the brain, which continues growing and developing until the early 20s. Again, practice in working through these situations is key to building the skills needed for good decision making. Focus on

goals, not fear. We sometimes use fear-based tactics to dissuade kids and teens from risky behaviors, such as sexual activity and drug and alcohol use. However, outcome research suggests that this approach is often ineffective because young people tend to feel invincible. Even if we say that a certain behavior has a very high risk of a negative outcome, they feel they will be the exception to the rule. In a cooperative study by the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Jemmett, Jemmett and Fong demonstrated that programs for prevention of risky behaviors are most effective when they are goal-focused, encourage critical thinking, and allow group discussion of the issues involved. Looking toward a bigger, positive goal down the road helped middle-school-age children avoid risky behaviors. After some guided group discussion, they were able to identify behaviors that might lead them away from their future goals, and these students were less likely to engage in sexual activity compared with students who had been through other prevention programs. Be open to questions. The teen and young adult years, especially, are times of identity development, striving for autonomy, and asking questions. This process sometimes includes asking questions or even voicing disagreement with Church teaching. We need to avoid acting defensive, even and especially if we are asked questions that we are unsure how to answer. Help learners live what they have received. Living a godly life means learning what it means to be self-giving people, loving God above all things and loving our neighbors as ourselves. The precise way in which this is lived out depends upon the vocation of each individual. However, the secret to long-term happiness is doing what we were made for—living the life God planned for us. It is never too early for children and teens to begin reflecting on who God made them to be and the steps toward becoming that person. Ask your learners who they feel God might be calling them to be and what his plan might be for their lives. While we often fear for the future of our youngest generation, God invites us beyond fear, to hope. This article is protected by United States copyright and other intellectual property laws and may not be reproduced, rewritten, distributed, disseminated, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast, directly or indirectly, in any medium without the prior written permission of Peter Li, Inc.

Chapter 4 : Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship – Catholic Telegraph

Practicing the virtues is another aspect of forming the conscience. This not only lets us do good acts, but it trains the will to desire to do good. In particular, the virtue of prudence affects the ability of conscience to judge rightly.

Links 10 Ways to Form Your Conscience 1. Study, pray and practice the Scriptures in your daily life. The word of God will lead you and be one of the most defining things in forming your conscience. At Mass, our way of thinking is focused on the "life-giving sacrifice of Jesus". The love of God and that communion with Him strengthens our desire to seek truth and act in a moral way. See where you are. Start with the commandments. Do you live each one the way you should? Do it and mean it. Find out what the Church teaches. Reference your catechism, talk to your fabulous youth group, your priest, your parents, read religious articles and books. Educate yourself on what the Church says and why. Pay attention to the little decisions. Take a look at the moral decisions that you make every day. All of sudden you are doing things that you did not think you would and it all started with a small choice. Pay attention to your environment. We are surrounded by tons of media. You want to be careful what you let into your soul. Surround yourself with things that line up with your morality as often as you possibly can. Look for role models. Look to those people who lead virtuous lives and can help lead you down the right path. Jesus said that He was "the way, the truth and the life". Look for the real thing. The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth.

Chapter 5 : Forming a Catholic Worldview and Conscience | Catholic Heart and Mind

The only way to refute the proposition that a Catholic with a properly formed conscience cannot vote for a candidate who favors abortion over one who favors restricting it, any more than a Catholic with a properly formed conscience could have justifiably voted for a pro-slavery or pro-Nazi candidate, would be to argue that.

The teenage girl told me that she thought that homosexuality was okay, because, she said, love is love, and love is good. I told her that if that were true, then I could cheat on my wife with another woman, because I could love two women at the same time—love is love in both cases. I think she got the point. The conversation with the Jesuit priest went something like this: But kids are living under a rock these days or rocks, known as peer pressure, Madison Avenue, academia, rock stars, sexting, movies, etc. So this article is dedicated to telling us all about sexual topics most priests shy away from in the pulpit, for whatever reason. Never Fear to Proclaim the Truth We, as Catholics, should never be ashamed to proclaim the truth from the rooftops. Usually, the choice involves either choosing the good, or choosing the bad. How do we know which is which? By having a well-formed conscience, which is formed by immutable truth. Jesus said in John If we are all going to let our conscience be our guide concerning the sin of artificial birth control, what is to stop us from using that philosophy with all sin, which means that six billion people on the planet can have six billion different sets of rules to follow? That would be chaos. Imagine if everyone made up their own rules when driving a car on the freeway! What if what we believe is wrong in the eyes of God, which is all that really matters, after all? Jesus founded a teaching Church to do just that for us. For priests and bishops to abdicate their official Catholic teaching responsibilities in favor of giving us their own personal opinions for whatever reason to be liked by their parishioners? The Church has seen a great drop-off in the number of attendees at Sunday Mass, and this is one of the reasons why. The Church has a Catechism, which is the official teaching of the Church. It is a product derived from sacred scripture, sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium. It has been approved by St. John Paul II, one of the greatest Catholic minds to ever live. The Catholic Church is an all-encompassing way of life. The Catholic Church is no different Matthew Having a personal relationship with Jesus is great, but not at the expense of ignoring the truth taught by His Church! Official Church Teachings from the Catechism To answer the questions concerning Church teachings on abortion, pornography, homosexuality, artificial contraception, and masturbation, here are the answers, linked back to the Catechism for your reference. The good news is that if we are guilty of these sins, Jesus awaits us in the confessional to forgive us with His limitless Divine Mercy, and to bring us back to complete unity with Him in the Eucharist. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law. God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants actors, vendors, the public , since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved. These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them, and favor the education of an authentic freedom. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality. So there you have it. The Church, which speaks for Christ , says that the above actions are all serious sins.

Chapter 6 : Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

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Voting With a Catholic Conscience. Forming a Catholic Conscience; Office of Worship. Share the Journey Campaign; Music Department. Music (Coros) Liturgy & Worship.

Chapter 7 : Forming a Catholic Conscience | Catholic Community of St. Luke the Evangelist | Houston, TX

"Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God His.

Chapter 8 : The Ten Commandments of Forming Catholic Conscience and Character - Today's Catholic Te

Moral Development and Catholic Conscience Formation Notes for New Catechists and Parents reasoning if we wish to assist them in forming a Catholic conscience. The.

Chapter 9 : Conscience - Wikipedia

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