

CONSCIENCE AND THE MORAL LAW: *the freedom to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God*

(Catechism of the Catholic Church 1730-1802, 1877-2051)

Introduction

Morality and conscience (in other words, what we *do* and what we *think* of what we do) are essential to being human. As far as we know, human beings are unique on earth in being the only form of life which analyses what he or she does and then compares it with a standard of living which is considered as “right” so as to decide whether he or she has done what is good. This standard of living we call ‘*morality*’. The ability to analyse our actions in comparison with this code of living we call ‘*conscience*’.

Both of these are *written into human nature*: they are natural to you and me. All of us at one stage or another have thought to ourselves “what I did then was right and good” – or “that was wrong.” To be able to do this is one of the things that make us human. But, like most things that make us different from the rest of creation as we know it, our conscience and sense of morality need to be exercised regularly. And without exercise, they become less familiar to us and less influential in the way we live our lives.

1. Man's calling to live a life of holiness

God made us to reflect him: our nature is designed to imitate his. What God is, we discover is the best for us, too. Thus - God is justice, and we discover that man needs to establish true and lasting justice to thrive and develop to his fullest potential. God is love – and so man is only fulfilled when he answers his call to live according to the values of self-giving love. It is only when man contemplates God, and who God is, that he discovers what his own nature is and how he is able to find fulfilment. St. Augustine described it beautifully and succinctly when he said:

- *"You created us for thee, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee."*

Ultimately, God made us to share in his own nature. He gives us his own life through the sacraments and through the life of prayer. God's nature, above and beyond all things is **holy**. God's holiness is the origin of all his perfection - it is because God is holy that he is the fullness of all perfection. Man discovers his true nature and how he can be truly happy only when he strives after the deepest truth of his nature - this is **holiness**. For this reason, God constantly calls man to imitate the holiness of God, and thus to fulfil his nature:

- *"You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy."* (Leviticus 19:2)

To make the point absolutely clear, Christ repeats the invitation in the course of his own teaching:

- *"Therefore be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* (Matthew 5:48)

The Church holds to this teaching very dearly: each and every human being is called to be holy. If man is not already holy, then his calling is to *become* holy through accepting and co-operating with the power of the Holy Spirit. He is constantly called by God to this not because God is a sadist who likes to watch his creatures attempting the impossible, but because God is a Father of his children who delights in seeing his children achieve the fullness of their potential and thus become complete. For this reason, the call to personal holiness is not restricted to monks or nuns. It is not only the priests and deacons of the Church who are called to live according to the laws of holiness - although there is more public scandal when they fail to live in a holy way. ALL humanity is called to holiness - because all humanity is made to image God, whose life is holy. This is especially true of those who have been baptised: they have received the Spirit of adoption and have truly become the children of God, sharing his nature. The baptised are called in a more urgent way to be holy because they have received the Spirit of holiness when they entered the Church. They are motivated by the Holy Spirit to yearn for an even greater sharing in the life and nature of God.

SO - holiness is not for the "professional" Christian like the monk or nun: it is for *every human being*, and particularly for each and every Christian person, regardless of the denomination. The Second Vatican Council spoke very powerfully about this in chapter 2 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*:

- *"God has willed to make men holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bonds between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness ...This people possesses the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple. Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us."* (*Lumen Gentium*, 9)

Baptism especially calls us to live in holiness - for us this means living in accordance with the revealed law of God. God shows us what holiness means in the life of the human being through many different ways - but prime among these are **the teaching of Christ in his Church** and in the workings of the individual's **conscience**.

This may sound unfair: why should we be obliged to live a life of holiness that is so hard? Why should being holy mean we have to follow so many laws and regulations? Why should we have to go to Mass each Sunday and on Holydays of Obligation, or observe the obligatory days of fasting and abstinence and so on? Why must we have to do all these things just to be holy - couldn't we just forget these rules, get on with being loving to each other and become just as holy - or perhaps even holier?

This is really all about language. Are we *forced* by God to live a dreary life of obeying rules and laws just to be called holy? Can't we be just as holy without them? The answer to both these is no. We aren't *forced* by God to obey these laws - he gives them to us because they are the only way we can be truly happy. In effect, these 'laws' are really only descriptions of how we should behave according to what we are. In other words, ***they are not arbitrary***: God does not reveal the moral law just to see if we will obey. He reveals the law because the law describes how we are designed to live. Remember the analogy we used last time about the car that is designed to be run on diesel. The instruction manual dictates that you must only put diesel in the tank. It also tells you exactly what pressure the tyres should be, the amount of oil that should be in the sump, the water that should be in the windscreen washers etc. These are 'laws' in the sense that if you do not obey them, the car will not function properly (or even at all!). Now, you and I are perfectly free to pour sugar into the tank if we wish - but the 'law' will tell you that this will damage the car, possibly irreparably. The same is true of the moral law: the Ten Commandments are like the car instruction manual - they describe certain conditions that will certainly damage the machine because the machine was not built to be treated that way. We can be sure that if we *do* decide to break these moral 'laws', we will damage ourselves. (Equally, we may damage others as well: we know the damage that can be caused by lies or theft, just as we know that bystanders can be injured if we crash our cars because we have not kept the tyres sufficiently pumped up).

We are called to live according to the moral law: this is to say no more than that we are called to live according to what we were designed to be - the children of God, made in his image. Sin, or the breaking of a moral law, is the choice to treat the 'machine' we have been given in a way that damages it. We may not like the law, or consider it unfair, just as the person driving the diesel car finds it unfair that he can not pump petrol into it, or the man finds it unfair that he can not be a mother - but simply to say that the law is unfair and therefore we are not obliged to follow it, is not going to prevent the damage done to the 'machine', because whether it is unfair or not, the 'machine' was not designed to be operated that way. Putting petrol into a diesel engine will explode the engine when it is turned on - whether it is fair or not! Jumping out of a window because we feel the "law" of gravity is unfair does not make us able to fly, nor do we succeed in breaking the law of gravity - we simply break ourselves (and give eloquent testimony that gravity *is* a law we are bound by even if we choose to rebel against it!).

So, our call to holiness is no more than the invitation to live in accordance with the way we were made. Whenever the Church teaches, "Thou shalt not..." or "All Catholics are obliged to..." the Church is actually only describing who we are: we ignore what she teaches at our own risk.

2. What is Conscience?

Conscience is very poorly understood today. To most people, the phrase “Do what your conscience tells you” is understood to mean, “Do what you want to do.” BUT - conscience is *not* the same thing as instinct or wishful thinking. Conscience does not primarily tell me what I *want* to do: it tells me what is the *right* thing to do - and these two are often very different.

Conscience is part of me - it's not an alien voice speaking inside me, telling me to do certain things. It is that part of me which is listening for the voice of God who leads me towards good and away from evil. It is actually more than a part of me - it is me at the deepest level. It is where I discover my true self and my real calling from God. The Second Vatican Council put it beautifully:

- *"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 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 conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths.**" (Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes, para. 16).*

St. Bonaventure called conscience “God's Herald”, and Venerable Cardinal Newman called conscience the “messenger of God.” Conscience is the place where God calls me to do good and avoid evil.

But it needs to be made aware of what good and evil are.

In some cases, conscience naturally knows and can identify good and evil: for instance, almost by instinct, human beings have realised that deliberately to falsify the truth is evil. We call this ***natural law***: those parts of the moral law of God that are knowable simply by thought and reflection, without direct revelation from God. We would say that nine out of the Ten Commandments are natural law – they are capable of being ‘guessed’ without God having to come down from heaven to tell us (the prohibition of idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, theft, lying, dishonouring parents, coveting the possessions of another). The only one that is not possible to ‘guess’ is the command to observe the holiness of the Sabbath. But there are many aspects of the moral law that we could not ‘guess’ without direct help from God; in other words, without *revelation*. That part of the law of God that he has communicated to us in the form of direct revelation (the Sacred Scriptures) we call ***revealed law***.

In the last session, dealing with the Law of Love, we looked at ***revealed law*** as the first of the two ways God tries to teach us about good and evil. In this session, we will look at the second way that God uses to teach us - the ***natural law*** and the role of ***conscience***.

3. The Natural Law

The quotation from the Second Vatican Council on the previous page speaks about the natural law. Please don't do what most people do and assume that natural law means simply the laws we observe in nature (so for instance the argument might go that homosexuality is contrary to nature because you don't see homosexual lions or newts). This is NOT what we mean by the *natural law*.

The natural law is what the Council speaks of - it is the law which man finds written in his very nature, in the way he thinks and feels. It is a law of which he is not the author but which his whole personhood calls out for him to follow. Since he did not write it, he has no power to re-write it. It is an inbuilt concept of truth, justice, right, holiness, which are identified as good; and it is the aversion to what is identified as falsehood, injustice, evil etc. The natural law calls us to fulfil our human nature - it is distinct to humanity because it describes human nature. Thus, the natural law leads us to the realisation that prayer (in common and in private) is essential to us because we are spiritual beings. Our spirituality needs to be exercised and we need to develop the spiritual life within us. It is not enough to know *about* God - we need to come to know *him* personally - through personal dialogue with him. This dialogue we call prayer. It is more than simply request or petition: it is rooted in praise and worship. We adore God for who he is, not just for what he has done.

The natural law is binding on all of us. This is so not because God wants to hedge us in with all sorts of rules and regulations that restrict our freedom, but because the natural law describes who we are.

Unfortunately, the natural law, which should be clearly perceivable by each one of us, has become clouded through the habit of sin. We are not so clearly able to know by instinct or by reason what good and bad are: often we choose what appears to be good for the very reason that it does indeed appear to be good - only to find that we have been deceived into choosing what turns out to be damaging and harmful. The first sin is described this way - Adam and Eve do what they think is a good thing (they are attracted by the serpent's tale that they will know all things and the difference between good and bad) and either don't realise or don't care to recall that this, for all its attractiveness and good qualities, is a bad thing to do. But we don't have to go that far back - there are plenty of examples from our own society and doubtless some in our own experience. For instance, we may truly believe that we are acting for good when we acknowledge the love we feel for someone we are not married to and decide that honesty demands we divorce our spouse and marry the new object of our affections. In this day and age, so many young people have been brought up to believe that divorce and remarriage are natural and perfectly good that I would say that for so many the natural law of their human nature (which should show them that a formal vow taken before God is not dissolvable on demand) has been clouded over to such a degree that they are unable to perceive what their nature was created to recognise as good. This is one of the enduring effects in us of original sin, which has become a part of human nature and remains with us even after original sin is washed away in baptism.

Sin has affected us in many ways. We know that from the ease with which we are able to do these things. BUT - more destructive by far is the lasting effect sin has had on the human soul - on our very humanity. Where we ought to be strong, we find we are

weak. Where we should have had greater understanding, we find we become confused between good and bad. When we might hope to be able to trust gut instinct we find that that too is a little off-centre. The early Christians spoke of three effects of sin on us:

- ***The darkened intellect:*** sin changes the way we think so much so that we become less able to think our way through moral problems. We confuse right with wrong and often end up pursuing wrong under the illusion that it is right. It clouds the way we think and use reason – we find we are mentally justifying what we realise after the event was wrong. OR we find we are talking ourselves into something with clever excuses. *The mind doesn't always see the truth of it.*
- ***The disordered desires:*** sin shifts our sense of priorities so that we value immediate gratification above delayed and future happiness. It is rare for us to forego the pleasures of the here and now on the grounds that greater happiness will be ours if we wait patiently. Our desires are no longer perfectly attuned to those things that will bring us lasting joy. If it were a choice between making a million in the next year (with all the earthly comforts that would bring) through some rather shady dealing, and remaining poor for the rest of our lives but being confident of our judgement and entry into heaven - well, not all of us would have the sense to choose the path of deferred gratification! *The heart does not always lead to God – it can lead to self-gratification!*
- ***The weakened will:*** on many occasions we are aware what the right thing to do is - but sin affects us in a second way by sapping the strength of our will to choose the right thing. I may know that lying is wrong, but I am not strong enough in determination to speak the truth and take the consequences. *Wanting to do good is very important – but we need (and lack) the strength of character and resolve to follow the truth through into practice.*

In short, sin affects us in these ways:

1. We don't *know* what the right thing is,
2. We don't *want* the right thing very much,
3. We don't *choose* the right thing even when we know what is right and have even set our heart on it.

So where does this leave us? It means that we have a formidable arsenal with which to address any moral problem - BUT that we cannot trust ourselves entirely. We are very good at fooling ourselves, and persuading ourselves that what we want to do is also (happily) the right thing to do. We need to be aware of our weaknesses so as not to be overconfident and think that we can do it on our own. We need to recognise that our *intellectual ability* to think out every problem is prone to its own flaws: that our *strength of determination* is not a constant and can weaken in the face of very alluring temptation: that *we can't even trust our instincts* because we discover that we don't always want what is good for us.

SO being a good Christian calls for care, prayer and the humility to take advice. We need to be ready to subordinate our own thoughts and instincts to the guidance of others who may not be as influenced by the situation as we are.

It means that we have to temper the subjective approach (what do I *think/feel* about this situation?) with the objective (what am I *told* about this situation?). The role of conscience is critical in this situation. Conscience is the perfect balance between these two because it contains elements of both. It is subjective, because it is a part of ME. It reflects the way that I think, it is guided by my past experiences and ultimately can only be heard by me - *I* have to interpret it. BUT it is also objective in that its character is not primarily just to parrot the way I am feeling, or to imitate what I want to do. Its function is to echo in my soul the meaning of the natural law – to show me how the natural law applies to the situation I am in. It is responsive to the holiness that it sees in God and recognises it as the pattern on which our lives are set.

4. Conscience

Conscience is man's attempt to answer to the voice of God echoing in his heart: the Church has always taught that conscience must be followed - we are obliged to *do* that which we in all truth think is right. But, sadly, conscience is not always right in its judgement. We can become confused in our minds, and mistakenly believe that something that is actually harmful to ourselves or to another is actually the *good* thing to do. The married businessman who falls for his secretary after many late nights when she stays behind to help in his work, may feel that his love for her is fittingly expressed by sleeping with her, but his conscience is serving him badly: his wife is certainly under no illusions as to whether his actions truly express love, at least as far as she is concerned!

So: how do we exercise our consciences properly? We must inform our consciences as to what is right and what is wrong. This will not happen automatically, nor can we just rely on instinct giving us a reliable answer. There is an old saying - *conscience is supreme but it is not infallible*. This means that we are first of all bound to do what our conscience commands us to do; BUT that there is no guarantee that our consciences will tell us accurately what the right thing to be done is. Our consciences can be in any number of states other than certain of the truth and correct in its certainty. Conscience can be

- *Erroneous* (and think that the wrong thing to do is actually right)
- *Probable* (i.e., when there is no moral teaching on a subject for us to be sure we are doing the right thing - this is often the case, especially with new technologies becoming available every day. For instance, it may be wrong to clone human beings, but is it wrong to clone animals?)
- *Perplexed or doubtful* (i.e., I don't know what the moral law has to say about this situation and I am not certain what the right thing to do is)

- **Lax** (i.e., a tendency to lessen the sinfulness of particular actions: I did it because I was depressed, or because she was lonely so since I did it for these good reasons, I didn't really do the wrong thing)
- **Strict** (a tendency to over-stress the sinfulness of actions)
- **Scrupulous** (i.e., with an exaggerated sense of right and wrong that leads it to be unable to choose any action for fear that the slightest bad consequence might flow from it)

SO - conscience is not just about “going with the flow.” It's more than just asking yourself what your instinctive reaction to a moral problem is. It is certainly more than asking what the majority of other people would think was right or wrong. It is about listening with the ears of the soul for the voice of God, which speaks to us in the very depths of our being and calls us to imitate Christ by sacrificing ourselves for the good of the Church and the world.

It is important for us to remember that we need to do more than just be sincere. It is not enough that we simply *aim* to do the right thing. It is important that we do all we can to actually **do** the right thing. WHY? Because anything else will cause us damage and damage others as well. It is not enough to ensure happy motoring that we simply have the good intention to put diesel into our diesel engine – we need to take real care that we actually **do** put diesel into it. Remember - the intention alone is not enough for Christ or for each other. We are generally not impressed when we are hugely let down by a friend or member of the family who then explains their actions with the phrase “well, I meant well by it.” Our Lord is very forthright:

- *“It is not those who say to me ‘Lord, Lord’ who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven but those who do the will of my Father who is in Heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)*

In the 1960s, when Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI were looking into the contraceptive pill to determine if it could be used without breaking the meaning of the marital covenant, many Catholics believed they could reliably guess the outcome of the investigation before the evidence was in - many priests, nuns and people openly advocated and defended the use of contraceptives thinking in good conscience that they were morally good. When the Church taught otherwise in 1968, the error of their consciences was revealed. So, we must make every effort to discover and understand what the Church teaches on a particular moral question so as to inform our consciences when making a moral decision. We need to trust the teaching of the Church, because it is through the Church that Christ continues teaching the world “Who ever hears you”, Christ told his Apostles, “hears me, and who ever hears me hears not me but the One who sent me.” (Lk. 10:16) When the apostles speak, or when their successors (the bishops) speak in solemn teaching, we hear the voice of Christ himself, and therefore the voice of the Father - if we truly seek to do what is right, we must pause to listen to what God is teaching the Church.

When making a moral decision in conscience, we need to think about three things:

1. **The action we are going to take.** Is the action in itself right or wrong? If it is right, we can proceed to the next step. If it is wrong, we need to pause - we can only go ahead if we have no alternative that is right. For instance, killing is always wrong (as the Commandment tells us) but occasionally there is no alternative (self-defence etc.) We should remember that the action is still wrong in itself and nothing will make it right in itself - but that in this circumstance it is not sinful because there is in all truth no alternative. Most certainly, we can't justify doing something wrong just because something good will come of it – the end justifying the means.
2. **The result we are aiming for (*our intention*).** This must be good, or at least neutral. If the end we are aiming for is itself wrong, we can not proceed, even if the means we intend to use are perfectly right in themselves: for instance I may want to annoy a neighbour (to get my own back) so I make a point of objecting to every little infringement of my rights (excessive noise, leaves from his tree falling into my garden etc.) While technically I am entitled to make the complaint, my intention is not to promote peaceful coexistence with my neighbour but to provoke or upset him.
3. **The circumstances of the action.** What I want to do may be right in itself, and my intention may be good, but if the circumstances are bad, I should think again. For instance: I may want to go shopping, and I may need certain items for supper tonight, but I have promised to stay at home to look after the baby.

See C.C.C. 1749-1761

We should only go ahead with the action if there is no moral objection on all of these grounds. We risk terrible consequences if we think only about one of these, such as our intention - we could end up wanting a good outcome but going about it in a way which is wrong (such as wanting to bring peace to Northern Ireland by executing all Protestants in the province!)

If all this sounds really complicated, remember that much of what is written here we do without really thinking about it. BUT there may be some aspects that we have grown slack about, or have never known about. We need to act as responsible adults: as actual lovers of Christ and holiness, which means as thinking, responsible adults. That means the days of taking moral decisions on instinct alone are over. We take moral decisions based on our real love of God himself and our desire to see his kingdom established in ourselves and in others through the actions we take. I have devised a little flow chart below which I hope will help you - especially in more weighty matters of conscience (but it is just as applicable in lesser matters, even if some of the steps will be easier and quicker to get through!)

Moral problem: you have a car that I rather like. Can I take it?

1. What does my fundamental conscience always tell me? DO GOOD AND AVOID EVIL. So, in this situation, what is the good action and what is the

bad action? For this I need to move to the next step, where I discover what the good and bad things are.

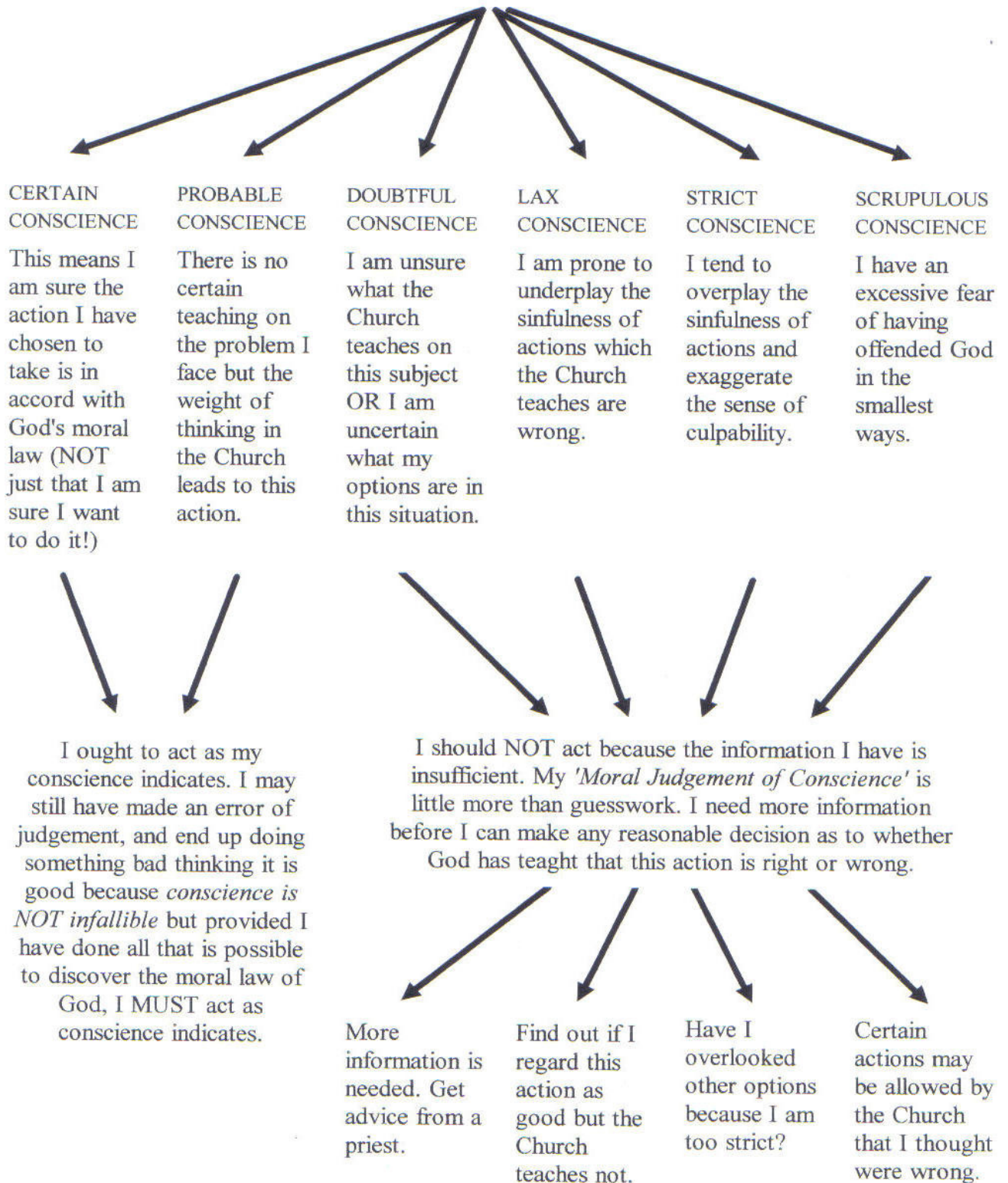
2. **MORAL KNOWLEDGE:** what specific actions are good and what actions are bad. I will find this out from all kinds of sources - the Sunday school I attended, the moral values of my parents, the attitudes of my peers and of my society. The teaching of authority figures - Christ, the Scriptures, the Church.
3. **PRACTICAL MORAL JUDGEMENT OF CONSCIENCE:** my conscience has to determine what I am going to do in this situation. This is where I make my decision, based on the prompting of conscience. Many things will be considered in order to come to a decision:

What are the options? To steal the car? To damage the car out of envy? Or to deal with my feelings of jealousy and to reject the idea of stealing it?

What do I know about the moral teachings in this area? Am I aware that stealing is definitely an evil action?

What is the level of understanding of my conscience? This is important because in certain states, I ought not to act. Is my conscience sufficiently prepared to come to a good moral decision? See the next page.

Moral problem: Can I take from you the car that you have and I rather like? I examine the state of my conscience to see if I may act on it.



I HOPE THAT THIS MAKES LIFE A LITTLE EASIER FOR YOU!!!

5. Morality - The Freedom of the Children of God

Ultimately, we are free to act as we choose. This means the freedom to choose between doing what is right and doing what is wrong: it does not mean the kind of freedom which is a license to do what ever we like - and whatever we like must be the right thing for us (a kind of moral *carte blanche*). Because God is a Father, he cares enough for his children to warn them that certain actions are always damaging for them. We are still free to do them if we want - but they will always hurt us, even if we are unaware of the damage, or if we act from good intentions. (Remember the diesel car - no matter what my intentions are, petrol will still cause damage to the engine). We are free to injure ourselves or to enhance our spiritual health by choosing a way of life that encourages the spiritual values.

The glory of the Gospel is that we have received the fullness of God's revelation: we have all the raw materials we need to come to good and right moral decisions. What we are called to do is to apply them to the moral problems we face. At our disposal is a remarkable arsenal of assistance.

- First we have the teaching of Christ himself, as contained in the Sacred Scriptures - often, this will need interpretation because the meaning may not be immediately clear.
- Then we have the assistance of the official teaching of the Church on moral matters: many of the problems we face have been encountered by the members of the Church before, and in the light or long reflection on Christ's teaching, and relying on the presence of Christ in the Church today to lead and guide us, we have the teachings of our Church - where the Gospel has been applied to the problem by past generations, and the path of God has been recognised.
- In addition, we have the assistance of the constant living of the Church: the advice and support of our brothers and sisters in the Church. They may have coped with the same issues themselves and can often offer genuine and good advice on how to act.
- Finally, of course, we have the instrument of our own consciences to draw on - the herald of God in the soul - where he speaks directly to us. As we have observed above, the conscience is not guaranteed to reach the solution that accords with God's law, because our consciences are not perfectly formed or instructed - and yet when it comes to the actual decision of what to do, it is to our conscience that in the end we must listen.

Objection

If we have a law of moral actions to which we should always refer, are we really free? This is a favourite question of many non-Catholics who see the moral laws of the Church as very dictatorial. They would argue that we are not free: we have to obey laws concerning worship, social justice, education, sexuality, health, wealth etc. and so we are strait-jacketed by rules.

This, certainly, was one of Martin Luther's criticisms of the Church, and you hear it still today. But common sense suggests they are wrong: as a society we have many laws that regulate our lives given us by Parliament, and these laws are enacted to preserve our freedom. My life is protected by the law prohibiting assault, battery and murder. My freedom of speech is protected by the law regarding libel, by my free access to the press and so on. Laws, even in civil society, are designed to safeguard the freedom of the individual by ensuring that the same liberties of others are limited and not absolute. If I had absolute freedom of movement (i.e., the right to go wherever I choose whenever I want), I would be removing legitimate freedom from everyone else (i.e., the right to privacy, the right to dispose freely with personal property etc.). So the very laws that protect my freedom also limit yours.

The same is true of the moral law: the law prohibiting theft is God's way of protecting the true freedom you should have to dispose of that which is yours. The law prohibiting adultery is there to protect the freedom of the married couple to love each other without the fear that tomorrow they will be rejected for someone else.

Our moral laws give us the chance to be truly free. This does not mean that we can do as we please: that is not freedom but dictatorship because it says that I can do what ever I wish, regardless of how much it will hurt you. True freedom is found only when you and I act fully in accord with who we are: when the diesel car is filled with diesel only. Only then can the human being operate to the fullest of his potential, as can the diesel. The more we choose what the moral law identifies as good, the freer we become, because we are unlocking and giving deeper expression to the true persons we were made to be.

In the words of Christ himself as recorded by St. John (8:32): "*The truth will set you free.*" To paraphrase that, we could say that to live according to the truth will give you true freedom.

- C.C.C. 1730-1748