

Fatima Mirror

A weekly publication for the education and edification of parishioners and friends of Our Lady of Fatima Parish of the Catholic Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Most Reverend Joseph V. Adamec, D.D. is the diocesan bishop. Father J.D. Zatalava, M.Div. is the pastor. Parishioners worship in the church building named after Saint Leo the Great, 2000 12th Ave. 16601. 814-942-0371.



Pope Benedict XVI

Today's Scripture Themes Explained In the words of:
The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Concerning Conscience

ARTICLE 6
MORAL CONSCIENCE

1782 Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. "He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters."

1783 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. 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.

1784 The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. 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.

1785 In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path, we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord's Cross. 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.



Keep the 5th Ward Clean
Push out the Pusher
693-3020

- Eliminating drug dealing and use.
- Prevent substance abuse among youth



One of the principal documents of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), devoted an entire paragraph (no. 16) to the subject of conscience. It is worth quoting in full:

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, tells him inwardly at the right moment: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. His dignity lies in observing this law, and by it he will be judged (cf. Rom. 2:15-16). His conscience is man's most secret core, and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths. By conscience, in a wonderful way, that law is made known which is fulfilled in the love of God and of one's neighbor (cf. Mt. 22:37-40; Gal. 5:14). Through loyalty to conscience Christians are joined to other men in the search for truth and for the right solution to so many moral problems which arise both in the life of individuals and from social relationships. Hence, the more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by the objective standards of moral conduct. Yet it often happens that conscience goes astray through ignorance which it is unable to avoid, without thereby losing its dignity. This cannot be said of the man who 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.

The Catechism (no. 1792) gives several examples of how conscience can go astray, identifying the following sources of errors of judgment in moral conduct:

- ignorance of Christ and His Gospel
- bad example of others
- enslavement to passions
- mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience
- rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching
- lack of charity

Conscience is our personal link to God's law, and it must be distinguished -- often with the help of a confessor or spiritual director -- from our natural inclinations and "passions." And deep down we know that as Catholics we are not acting with a "certain" conscience when we make choices known to be at odds with the Church's moral teaching.

STEWARDSHIP: Time, Talent, and TREASURE**MONEY MATTERS: Third Sunday of Lent (February 24)**

255 people Celebrated Liturgy at O.L.F.

Contributing \$1,854.50 of which \$183.54 accounted for "loose" cash \ checks (no envelope)

Envelopes in Circulation	234
Number of Envelopes used	108
Envelopes unused	126

An excerpt from: **More Than a Feeling, What it Means to Follow Your Conscience** By Leon J. Suprenant, Jr.
My Own Personal Jesus

A truly major source of error for the conscience is the "rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching." What all this comes down to is a crisis of objective truth, a lack of confidence in objective moral norms, and ultimately a widespread rejection of God and his action in our life, which is known as "secularism." As Pope John Paul II eloquently noted in *The Gospel of Life*, when we lose the sense of God we lose the sense of the dignity of mankind, and serious, systematic transgressions of the moral law are sure to follow (cf. CCC 2087).

But even for Catholics who have not fully succumbed to secularism and strive to follow Christ on some level, the Church still presents a real stumbling block. At best this manifests itself as a crypto-Protestantism, and at worst it can mark the early stages of a complete loss of faith. When the Church's God-given authority is undercut, a significant vacuum is created. Where is truth? Some are content with a democratic or utilitarian approach: Give the people what they want. Rather than entrust Church teachings to a bunch of unenlightened old men (i.e., the successors of the apostles), they'd rather put these things to a vote. If most people use artificial contraception or favor "gay marriage," for example, the Church should lighten up. After all, the only mortal sin is intolerance.

Others find truth in a radically privatized faith that is about "me and Jesus" without the complexities and demands of the Church. And it's amazingly convenient how everyone's subjective "Jesus" approves of his or her moral deviations. Why strive to be more like Christ if we can create our own replica of Christ that is more like us?

In his February 24, 2007 address to the Pontifical Academy for Life, Pope Benedict XVI forcefully reminds us that the formation of a conscience that is both true (i.e., founded on the truth) and upright (i.e., without contradictions, betrayal, or compromise) is absolutely indispensable to Christian living.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR March 3-9 2008

Monday	03/03	08:00 AM	Vincent Farabaugh, Sr., Jeanie & Family	<i>Katherine Drexel, virgin</i>
Tuesday	03/04	08:00 AM	John S. Bacza, M/M Stanley J. Krish & Fam	<i>Casimir</i>
Wednesday	03/05	08:00 AM	Sally Colledge, Jean Hagan	<i>Lenten Weekday</i>
Thursday	03/06	08:00 AM	Debra Shuma, M/M Jack Douglass	<i>Lenten Weekday</i>
Friday	03/07	08:00 AM	Wally Jorkasky, Wife & Family	<i>Perpetua and Felicity, martyrs</i>
Saturday	03/08	04:30 PM	Raymond F. McCall, Children	<i>5th Sunday of Lent</i>
Sunday	03/09	09:00 AM	Robert Moses, Anv., Wife and Family	<i>5th Sunday of Lent</i>
Sunday	03/09	11:00 AM	Liv/Dec of Our Lady of Fatima Parishioners	<i>5th Sunday of Lent</i>