

## DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

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From the Compendium to the Catechism paragraphs: 372 – 378

### What is moral conscience?

Moral conscience, in the heart of the person, is a judgment of reason which – at the right time – enjoins him or her to do good and to avoid evil. Thanks to moral conscience, the human person perceives the moral quality of an act to be done or which has already been done, permitting him or her to assume responsibility for that act. When attentive to moral conscience, the prudent person can hear the voice of God who speaks to him or her.



### What does the dignity of the human person imply for the moral conscience?

The dignity of a human person requires their moral conscience to be in accord with what is just and good according to reason and the law of God. Because of this personal dignity, no one may be forced to act contrary to conscience; nor, within the limits of the common good, be prevented from acting according to it, especially in religious matters.

### How is a moral conscience formed to be upright and truthful?

An upright and true moral conscience is formed by education and by assimilating the Word of God and the teaching of the Church. It is supported by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and helped by the advice of wise people. Prayer and an examination of conscience can also greatly assist one's moral formation.

### What norms must conscience always follow?

There are three general norms:

1. One may never do evil so that good may result from it;
2. The so-called "Golden Rule": "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Matthew 7:12);
3. Charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbour and his conscience, even though this does not mean accepting as good something that is objectively evil.

### Can a moral conscience make erroneous judgments?

A person must always obey the certain judgment of his or her own conscience but he or she could make erroneous judgments for reasons that may not always exempt him from personal guilt. However, an evil act committed through involuntary ignorance (ignorance that is not one's fault) is not imputable to the person, even though the act remains objectively evil. In other words, if you don't know you are doing wrong – and you don't know it by no fault of your own – it is still a wrong act but the blame is not on you. It is therefore important to

know why the Church holds this or that act to be wrong, and one must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience.

## THE VIRTUES

### What is a virtue?

A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. There are human virtues and theological virtues.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa



The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.

### What are human virtues?

The human virtues are habitual and stable perfections of the intellect and will that govern our actions, order our passions and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They are acquired and strengthened by the repetition of morally good acts and they are purified and elevated by divine grace.

*It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact [deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk)*