



Scripture Nugget – Do we have the interior silence to heed our conscience?

This is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before Him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything (1 John 3:19-20).

The dignity of a human person lies in a good conscience (cf. CCC 1780). God gifts every person with a moral conscience that elevates him/her above all His other creatures. Thus, the dignity of the human person is the innate ability to know what is good, true, just and to judge the moral value of thoughts, words or deeds. St Paul tells us that if we reject our conscience, we risk the shipwreck of our faith (cf. 1 Timothy 1:19). The laws of the Creator are written on our hearts, and God speaks to us through our conscience. The conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a human person; there, the voice of God is heard (cf. CCC 1776). In order that the conscience is upright and truthful, it must be informed and formed in the truths of Christ, the Eternal Truth (cf. John 14:6) in order that its moral judgement is enlightened. This is especially necessary in a modern society where a person is subject to many negative influences, temptations to sin, to pride preferring one's own subjective judgement and rejecting authoritative moral teachings. The education of our conscience is a lifelong process. We have to study, reflect and put into practice God's Word as written in Holy Scripture, and the authoritative teachings of the Church. It is the Holy Spirit in our soul, our interior Teacher Who teaches us to understand the truths of our faith. Through study, meditation and putting into practice God's Word, sincere prayers, heeding the holy counsel of others, and daily examination of our conscience we can consciously form and refine our conscience so that it is always solidly rooted in Christ's truths.

Are we sufficiently present to ourselves in order to hear, follow and examine our conscience? Do we have the interior silence that is needed to hear the voice of our conscience? There are numerous obstacles to the interiority that is needed to allow our conscience to guide us. Distraction of all sorts is a normal feature of life. The setting aside of quiet time daily is a good spiritual exercise to be in touch with our conscience. A soul that has got used to habitual sin also finds it difficult to hear the voice of the conscience. The trivialization or legalization of a sin does not make it less serious in the eyes of God. Making frequent and sincere Confession can help us overcome the temptation to trivialize sin and to take our salvation for granted. Rationalization of sin or projecting one's guilt on others, or making excuses for oneself or relativizing sin shuts up our conscience and blunts our ability to heed it. Thus, practising humility and making an honest daily examination of conscience is necessary for a conscience to remain truthful, upright and free from guilt or fear.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, the most uplifting truth is that You are always ready to forgive in the face of true repentance. There is absolutely no need for me to be burdened by a heavy conscience because of my past wrong doings. Purify my mind and my heart of pride and all that blinds me to the existence of my sins or trivializes it or rationalizes it or relativizes it. Give me the grace of true contrition and a great detestation of sin which separates me from You. Give me the grace to develop a good upright conscience which will help me lead my Christian life with joy, conviction and holy boldness. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.