

Hello to Sunday!

If you notice some changes (maybe and a little mess) on the south side of the school building, it is the beginning of a new children's garden. St. Joseph Catholic School received a grant from the Anderson Master Gardeners Association to create a STEM children's garden. The goal is to help children come into contact with the created world and foster hands-on learning. Over the coming weeks, you will see paths being added, decorations and beautification, an herb garden with the shape of a celtic cross, and different winter crops being planted. Thank you to our generous donors! (Picture below)

1. Today's Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/101820.cfm>

2. ***The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus:*** "We encourage all citizens, particularly Catholics, to embrace their citizenship not merely as a duty and privilege, but as an opportunity meaningfully to participate in building the culture of life. . . . Every act of responsible citizenship is an exercise of significant individual power. We must exercise that power in ways that defend human life, especially those of God's children who are unborn, disabled or otherwise vulnerable. We get the public officials we deserve. Their virtue—or lack thereof—is a judgment not only on them, but on us. Because of this we urge our fellow citizens to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest." [Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics 34, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 1998]

As we approach the upcoming election, we hear the term *a well-formed conscience*. What exactly does a well-formed conscience mean? How do we form a Catholic conscience? It is worthwhile to note that it is not just for election time, but important when we make decisions of any value.

3. Quote of the Day: The Catholic Church never suits the particular mood of any age, because it was made for all ages. A Catholic knows that if the Church married the mood of any age in which it lived, it would be a widow in the next age. The mark of the true Church is that it will never get on well with the passing moods of the world: "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19) *Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen*

4. Sunday Song - **Be Not Afraid** by Bob Dufford, S.J.

You shall cross the barren desert  
But you shall not die of thirst  
You shall wander far in safety  
Though you do not know the way.

You shall speak your words in foreign lands  
And all will understand

You shall see the face of God and live.

Be not afraid  
I go before you always  
Come follow Me  
And I shall give you rest.

If you pass through raging waters  
In the sea, you shall not drown  
If you walk amidst the burning flames  
You shall not be harmed.

If you stand before the pow'r of hell  
And death is at your side  
Know that I am with you, through it all.

Be not afraid  
I go before you always  
Come follow Me  
And I shall give you rest.

Blessed are your poor  
For the Kingdom shall be theirs  
Blest are you that weep and mourn  
for one day you shall laugh.

And if wicked men insult and hate you  
All because of Me  
Blessed, blessed are you!

Be not afraid  
I go before you always  
Come follow Me  
and I shall give you rest.

Remember to stay focused on your journey with God ~ eyes up, ears, and hearts open. The true messages to lead a fulfilling life.

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Children's Garden

## **MORAL CONSCIENCE**

**1776** "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 conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."<sup>47</sup>

### **I. THE JUDGMENT OF CONSCIENCE**

**1777** Moral conscience,<sup>48</sup> present at the heart of the person, enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil.<sup>49</sup> It bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments. When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking.

**1778** Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. 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 a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.<sup>50</sup>

**1779** It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience. 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.<sup>51</sup>

**1780** The dignity of the human person implies and requires *uprightness of moral conscience*. 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.

**1781** Conscience enables one to assume *responsibility* for the acts performed. 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:

We shall . . . reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.<sup>52</sup>

**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."<sup>53</sup>

## II. THE FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE

**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,<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

### **III. TO CHOOSE IN ACCORD WITH CONSCIENCE**

**1786** Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them.

**1787** Man is sometimes confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult. But he must always seriously seek what is right and good and discern the will of God expressed in divine law.

**1788** To this purpose, man strives to interpret the data of experience and the signs of the times assisted by the virtue of prudence, by the advice of competent people, and by the help of the Holy Spirit and his gifts.

**1789** Some rules apply in every case:

- One may never do evil so that good may result from it;
- the Golden Rule: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them."<sup>56</sup>
- charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbor and his conscience: "Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience . . . you sin against Christ."<sup>57</sup> Therefore "it is right not to . . . do anything that makes your brother stumble."<sup>58</sup>

### **IV. ERRONEOUS JUDGMENT**

**1790** A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. 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.

**1791** This ignorance can often be imputed to personal responsibility. 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."<sup>59</sup> In such cases, the person is culpable for the evil he commits.

**1792** Ignorance of Christ and his Gospel, bad example given by others, enslavement to one's passions, assertion of a mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience, rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching, lack of conversion and of charity: these can be at the source of errors of judgment in moral conduct.

**1793** If - on the contrary - the ignorance is invincible, or the moral subject is not responsible for his erroneous judgment, the evil committed by the person cannot be imputed to him. It remains no less an evil, a privation, a disorder. One must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience.

**1794** A good and pure conscience is enlightened by true faith, for charity proceeds at the same time "from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith."<sup>60</sup>

The more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by objective standards of moral conduct.<sup>61</sup>

Source: Catechism of the Catholic Church