

# Moral Theology

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## Abstract:

“Moral Theology” is theology in this narrower sense. It proceeds in the light of faith, with constant reference to Scripture and other authoritative expressions of the Church’s faith. “Interpretation” refers to systematic efforts to facilitate communication and overcome misunderstandings. This is where theology as we commonly understand it begins. The theological interpreter tries to find and state the true and full meaning of texts of Scripture and other authoritative expressions of the Church’s faith. This is the task of the part of theology called “positive theology”.

## INTRODUCTION

Text Message: The way you induce efforts and time in anything you do is how you become more oriented and acquainted with the knowledge of that perspective or field you do. I injected my efforts in spiritual apprenticeship and word of GOD for only six months, then it paid thousands into glorious miracles which surprised me too .God is good .

## What is Moral Theology?

“**Theology**” refers to reflection upon the sources in which the truth of faith is articulated. Such theology is subordinate both to Scripture and to certain other documents, which bear witness to the Christian faith. “**Moral**” Concerned with principles of right and wrong or conforming to standards of behavior and character based on those principles.

“**Moral Theology**” is theology in this narrower sense. It proceeds in the light of faith, with constant reference to Scripture and other authoritative expressions of the Church’s faith. “**Interpretation**” refers to systematic efforts to facilitate communication and overcome misunderstandings. This is where theology as we commonly understand it begins. The theological interpreter tries to find and state the true and full meaning of texts of Scripture and other authoritative expressions of the Church’s faith. This is the task of the part of theology called “*positive theology*”.

Besides positive theology, it also includes systematic reflection.

Systematic theologians try to determine the relationships between truths of faith and other propositions, which are not revealed but seem true. The goal is a fuller understanding of the truths of faith and their implications. A classic formula summing up the work of systematic theology is “faith seeking understanding.” Systematic theologians help the whole people of God to carry out this work of integration; they help especially at the boundary where revealed and non-revealed truths meet. Here rational reflection upon non-revealed truths extends to consider those truths which can be known by reason and which also pertain to revelation.

## **Moral Theology its Nature, Purpose and Biblical Foundations**

### **Its Nature and Purpose**

As aforementioned moral theology is a practical science for its main aim is to make clear how faith should shape Christian life. Thus an important question to answer or to be answered in finding out the nature and purpose of Moral Theology is who are we? And who are we meant to be or rather who are we called to be?

Such questions rest of course on some presuppositions. It presupposes that we do not know, when we come into being, who we are and what we are to do if we are to be fully the beings we are meant to be, but that we have the capacity to find out. It further presupposes that we are not, when we come into existence, fully the beings we are meant to be, but that we are capable of becoming such. In addition, it presupposes that we have a destiny to which we are summoned in the depths of our being. And, finally it presupposes that we are in charge of our own destiny, that we can, through our own free, self-determining choices, shape our own lives.

### **The Purpose and Function of Moral Theology**

Moral theology is a systematic reflection on the Christian moral life. As Grisez says, it seeks “to make clear how faith should shape Christian life, both the lives of individuals and the life of the church.” It seeks to help us come to know, through the exercise of reason enlightened by faith, what we are to do if we are to be faithful children of God and become fully the beings we are meant to be, i.e. other Christs, called to eternal life in and with him. It is thus concerned with human actions. It is so because, we make ourselves to bet the persons we are in and through the acts we freely choose to do.

All things subject to change and to becoming never remain constant, but continually pass from one state to another, for better or worse ...now, human life is always subject to change, it needs to be born ever anew but here birth does not come about by a foreign intervention, as is the case with bodily beings, it is the result of free choice. Thus we are in a certain way our own parents, creating ourselves as we will, by our decisions.

It thus follows that moral theology is occupied in great measure with human conduct and with the principles and norms or moral truths meant to help us make good moral choices about what we are to do if we are to become fully other Christs, the beings God wants us to be as members of the divine family. Theology in other words, is greatly concerned with human acts, which are like “words’ that we speak and in and through which we freely give to ourselves our identity. To put it another way; we become fully the beings we are meant to be –i.e. other Christs –in and through the actions we freely choose to do.

### **Biblical Foundations of Moral Theology**

Emphasized that sacred scriptures should be the SOUL OF THEOLOGY, including Moral Theology. The scriptures are the source of moral theology.

#### **1.2.2.1. Old Testament**

The OT morality is a morality of a covenant. It is a pact, which established a relationship between Yahweh and his people. The covenant Morality that can be traced since Abraham is however the dominating theme of the OT and the intrinsic element of this pact is the Decalogue (Ex 20:1-21). When the people of Israel entered the Promised Land, Joshua renewed the covenant of the Decalogue. And in chapters 24 the covenant continued to be renewed in the times of Solomon with the consecration of the temple. If we have

to go to examine the Sinai covenant, we find that it is bound up with the Passover, i.e. the Escape from Egypt and the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea.

The OT morality is essentially religious. OT morality is not autonomous but it is Theonomous that is it is attributed to God. The commandments were not or did not originate from the Jews for also find the same rules also in the surrounding areas among their neighbors. But for the Israelites they gave them a new meaning by attributing them to God and for them there was only one God the ruler of the earth and the source of everything that is found on earth.

OT morality refers directly to Yahweh. To break this morality was an insult to Yahweh and brings with it the result of disobedience. The OT morality is radically different from the Greek Ethics. While the Greeks tried to build a moral system on human reason and various ideas of Good Life God had no place in their morality.

### **The making of Sinai covenant**

The Sinai covenant is wrought with Passover, that is brought with the freedom that Israeli were given from pharaoh bondage. It is an experience of liberation, which was to characterize the relationship between Yahweh and his people. It invites the people of Israel in this context of liberation to a new freedom after the experience of slavery. The covenant with the commandment was to be binding to the Israelites but at the same time it gave them freedom.

### **New Testament**

As in the OT in NT God himself is the source and motive of all moral obligations. The NT relies upon God's actions as it is developed through Jesus Christ in his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus as the new Moses who leads us onto the Promised Land –heaven, gave us the code of Covenant, of the pact and this is found in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Mt. 5-7, Lk 6), this is the code of the NT morality.

### **The Synoptic Gospels have the following specific moral teachings: -**

- a) Jesus teachings transcend the national and racial boundaries of Judaism and lays foundation for a universal religion. Though Jesus never went outside Palestine but preached in Capernaum a place, which was multicultural. The basic thing of this universal religion is the kingdom of God that is the one true God will rule in human body and heart. Jesus demands total devotion to the father. The kingdom of God does not know physical boundaries since it addresses the heart and lives of every human being. There are these requirements:
- Repentance / metanoia change of heart and mind which leads to a change of behavior. Metanoia is more than just feeling sorry in our sense; entering into the kingdom one must repent and believe. Repentance brings a new lifestyle

As a result of this repentance Jesus becomes the One to believe in; Jesus as the Son of God. In Jesus the Christian is required to believe, to trust, to submit oneself to his message, as Jesus is the one who came to re-establish the relationship between humanity and God himself. He is the Son of the living God, the mediator between heaven and earth; he is truly God and truly man. Jesus' moral teachings are radical, he puts challenges to his disciples and he puts before them a boundless or open generosity. The radical obedience that he demands goes beyond the written law. Jesus insists on the disposition of the heart that helps the disciple to live this new spirit. The disciples are to be the light and the source of the world, they

cannot hide on living a different lifestyle they need to be a sign of contradiction as there is no compromise to the world. Jesus had come not to abolish but to perfect the laws in fact he interiorized the demand of the laws it not only adultery but also lustful thoughts, are condemned, it is not only the killing but anything that contrast the commandment of love the permission given to the Jews like divorce the retaliating laws for Jesus the focus of his message were the beatitudes. The beatitudes are the fulfilment of the hopes of the poor, the dispossessed and turn towards righteousness. According to Jesus the beatitudes are the perfect paths of the Christian life it is a revelation that speak of the basic attitudes and dispositions that Jesus demanded from his disciples. “The beatitudes above all are promises from which flow indirectly normative indications for the moral life. They are sort of self-portrait of Jesus. Invitation to his disciples and to be in communion with him.

## **MORAL NORMS**

Norms and morality are essential aspects in Moral Theology.

The essence of morality consists in the relationship between human activity and norms of moral conduct. The term norm stems from the Latin term *norma*, are originally signifying a carpenter’s square. It points out to a rule, a standard, a pattern. The term norm is also used to point out to the official standard or level that one is supposed to reach. Since norms of morality are essentially concerned with human conduct, a norm is thus understood as a standard of human conduct, a pattern of human conduct that is typical (of a group, etc...).

In this sense we can speak of moral norms as criteria of judgement with regard to sort of persons we ought to be and the sort of actions we ought to perform.

## **OBJECTIVE MORAL NORM -MORAL LAW (LAW)**

### **Preliminary**

Observations Moral law as an objective norm points out the fact that law, as a moral criterion is not a product of personal feelings or wish or opinion. It is real and present prior to the individual (person) who is the subject of moral life. It is objective in contradistinction to subjective moral norm.

### **Notion**

Law is generally presented as a constant way of action or reacting. It is directive rule of activity. As such it refers also to physical laws, biological laws, and the like. Our main sphere of discussion is man and his obligations in view of his destiny.

### **Content of Moral law**

The content of moral law is incorporated or incarnated in natural and positive law. It implies that which man must do to realize his goal (for which he has been created). Despite the fact that the contents are immutable, human understanding and the formulations therefrom do change because the reality of life (concrete life) to which the law is applied is characterized by both constancy and mutability. The moral law also includes counsels, recommendations, permission and the like, for all the aspects accompany man in his walk towards his destiny –ultimate end.

### **Division of Moral Law**

By division of moral law, we simply mean different expressions of the moral law. These various

expressions do not exclude one another, rather they are interrelated; there is eternal law which is identical to divine reason –it governs all things in the universe and all things are subject to it–directs them to their proper ends. There is also the natural law, which is eternal law as knowable by sound human reason without the assistance of positive revelation. Then there is human law, which is the interpretation and application of natural law in particular cases.

### **Eternal Law (lex aeterna)**

This is God’s wisdom with which all actions and motions of the universe are directed. It is the ultimate source of all law and ultimate directive of all acts, activity and motions of all creatures:

A governor has in mind the type of order he desires among his subjects. God is the infinite and all-perfect governor. God therefore has in himself the “type” of what creatures are to do to attain their end and purpose. This “type” is divine wisdom viewed as eternal law. Hence, we say, “The eternal law is the type of divine wisdom directing all acts and movements”.

### **Natural Moral Law**

The term “natural” is derived from Latin nascor, nasci, natus sum (which means to be born) suggesting what is given by birth, i.e. what is inborn. It is a law or rule of action implicit in the very nature of beings (things). With regard to the human being natural moral law refers to the moral insights which man is capable of knowing them by means of his reason (natural reason). In other words, natural law is the moral order arising or derived from the very nature of man and creation at large and which man can recognize through his natural reason. Natural law is internal and personal: natural law is a reality, which grows from the fact of humanity. Man discovers natural law by his own reason. It is rather a gift of nature (datum naturae) than an integral part of the person; it is what man can understand of himself through grace and reason.

### **Properties of Natural Law**

Natural law is Universal: It binds all Men always and everywhere. This is because all men share one common nature, all men have one common destiny-ultimate end and the same existential ends. However, the law can bind man only if it is known to him because a law cannot bind in conscience before it can be known. To mention it immediately, man is capable of knowing at least the basic principle, which have been mentioned above, that is known good must be done and evil must be avoided and the “golden rule.”

### **Natural Law is Immutable:**

Natural Law is absolute in its formal aspect. There are some elements in human nature, which do not change; they are not contingent, for instance conscience and freedom. However, it is relative in its material aspect, for it is not static but dynamic. In other words, although the essence of the human person remains the same, there are however, some developments –changes that characterize his history. Moreover, his conditions of existence change. As such there is alteration of human insight into natural Law.

### **Natural Law is Indispensable**

No one is exempted from the obligations of natural law. No human authority can give dispensation in this regard. This would amount to usurpation of God’s authorship, which would also mean acting against His

will. Exceptions are possible but by God Himself, e.g. miracles, Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac. Accordingly, epikeia cannot be applied to natural laws in the strict sense.

### **Natural Law, Effects of Obligation:**

Arises from two facts that is the essential order of things-creatureliness and God who is the lawgiver. Of all creatures, only man has been endowed with a moral law and with reason to discern his obligations. To act in accordance with the moral law is to be true to his nature, to disobey it is to fall lower than the brute (brutus), is to attempt a life opposed to God's authority (God who is the law giver).

### **Sanction:**

One who does not comply with the demands of natural law must be ready to suffer the negative consequences there from. Natural law rewards those who obey it and punishes those who disobey it: virtue is its own reward and vice is its own punishment. A Chinese proverb says: there is no happiness like that of doing good, and there is no hell like sinning.

This explains the fact that virtue (constant adherence to the good) enhances man's self-realization while vice (persistent acting contrary to the good) frustrates it. The scriptures reveal that one reaps what he sows. Even Christian mercy does not dismiss it but enhances. Mt.5:17 and 7:16-17.

### **Positive –Divine Moral Law**

The term "positive" is derived from Latin pono, ponere, posue, positum (to lay, put, place). Divine law therefore suggests a type of law laid down or put by divine authority and therefore divine in origin. It is the whole revelation as contained in the Sacred Scriptures. Positive divine law is that law given to man by God as a complement to natural law. Its existence and contents are known through revelation (positive divine revelation), i.e. communicated to man in an immediate and supernatural way.

Positive divine law includes precepts of the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament is preparatory in relation to that of the New Testament. (Cf. Rm 7:1-6, Gal: 3:23-26).

However, God does not give a new morality in the Scriptures Dt 30:11-4. Jesus says: "do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true" (Mt: 5:17). What makes it distinct is that it gives new light or new vision, which facilitates a deeper understanding of human morality. This law also provides man with a better motivation in acting because it is nourished by love according to the new insights provided for by Jesus Christ.

Since Christian ethics basically finds its identity in positive divine law, we could say that Christianity is a well-founded motive for human morality. Furthermore, this law has efficient means for man to enable him achieve his destiny; the church and its teachings, sacraments and so on.

### **Positive -Human Law**

Refer to the etymological description above, pono, ponere, posui, positum. Accordingly, positive human law is that moral directive laid down or put by human authority and thus its immediate source (author) or origin is human authority. It falls under two basic spheres, viz. Christian ethics and Civil Law for the state.

**Significance (necessity) of Human Law**

- Human law clarifies the demands of natural law in view of the concrete life to which it is applied.
- Human law enforcers obedience to moral demands.
- Human law determines the modality of complying effectively and precisely with demands of natural moral law, in cases where there are several possibilities to do so.

**CONSCIENCE****Introduction****Conscience as a Moral Norm in General**

Conscience is one of the norms of morality –objective moral norm and subjective moral norm. Norms and morality are essential aspects in moral theology.

**Conscience as Subjective Norm**

Conscience is a subjective moral norm. It is a criterion for the morality of an act rooted within the subject. One could then say that conscience refers to the subjective judgement about right and wrong, good or evil. Conscience is a moral faculty manifesting to men their moral obligations and impelling them to fulfil them. It is also a practical moral judgement, which shows men in concrete situations what their moral obligations are. Conscience is a subjective moral norm in contradistinction to objective moral norm.

**Understanding of Conscience****Conscience as a Moral Faculty**

Conscience informs the individual (subject) about his personal (subjective) calling with regard to God's plan of creation. Conscience is thus a faculty, "situated in the very depth and centre of the human person, which accords to man an understanding of his meaning and destiny, an awareness of the divine propose behind the world, a perception of his personal calling within God's plan, and an experience of the imperative character of this calling. Implied in this is the spiritual and emotional urge to comply with demands resulting from the call. Conscience is that faculty which makes known to man his moral obligations and urges him to fulfil them.

The catholic theological tradition has attested to the primacy, dignity and inviolability of the moral conscience. According to that tradition, no one is to be forced to act contrary to his or her conscience.

While the dignity and inviolability of conscience in our tradition is incontestably clear, the meaning of conscience in the minds of many is not so clear. What does the church intend to uphold when speaking of the inviolable dignity and freedom of conscience? To what does the church refer when speaking of conscience as or "most secret core and sanctuary"?

**Conscience as a Practical Moral Judgement.**

Conscience as a practical moral judgement is to be distinguished from mere judgement of speculative nature (formulation of general moral principles concerning the morality of human actions in the abstractive. without relation to the concrete activity of a person here and now. It is a practical judgement on the morality of a concrete action, commanding to do what is good and to avoid what is evil. The dictate of conscience in this regard has to be followed, i.e. the obligation to follow the voice of conscience is categorical conscientious semper sequenda.

The judgement of conscience is thus understood as ultimate (of course at a subjective level, not objectively, i.e. the resulting judgement is not necessarily always to be followed or agreed by others for the simple reason that subjective judgement which in common parlance is individual and even personal judgement is sometimes mistaken and opposed to common good or common welfare even in some cases detrimental to society –in disagreement with objective truth).

### **Division of Conscience**

**Antecedent:** when the judgement on the morality of an action and the obligation to perform or omit it is passed before the action is translated into reality, i.e. commands, exhorts, permits, forbids and the like.

**Consequent:** when it deals with or evaluates the morality of an action done or omitted, i.e. approves, excuses, reproves, accuses and the like. **Right:** When its practical judgement agrees with objective moral norm(s), objective truth (objective reality).

**Erroneous:** When its practical judgement disagrees with objective moral norm(s) or objective truth. **Certain:** when it passes judgement without fear of error. **Doubtful:** When it passes judgement with reasonable fear of erring, it is uncertain concerning the morality of an action.

### **The Binding Force of Conscience**

If the dictate of conscience is to be followed categorically there arises the question, then: what to do with the erroneous conscience? Does it mean that the obligation to follow the dictate of conscience is unconditional or absolute? Are there instances or exceptions whereby the dictate of conscience may not be followed? What kind of conscience does enjoy such binding force?

### **The Certain Conscience**

It has been asserted: *conscientia semper sequenda*. It must be underlined that this affirmation refers only to a certain conscience; a certain conscience must always be obeyed even if it is erroneous. In this regard there is no question of whether conscience is right or erroneous, what is essential here is that conscience is certain; it must be a certain conscience. However, it is important to distinguish between two degrees of erroneous conscience, i.e. *vincibly erroneous* and *invincibly erroneous*. It is the *invincibly erroneous* conscience, which is referred to here.

We can then once more precisely state as follows: -a certain conscience must always be followed even if it is erroneous, but only if it is *invincibly erroneous*, for the simple reason that like the right conscience an *invincibly erroneous* conscience makes its judgement without fear of error (because it is not aware of its being objectively wrong). The *vincibly erroneous* conscience is excluded in this regard because it makes its judgement with some degree of fear (it has some doubts –it is thus a type of a doubtful conscience) of error. So it is not reliable and thus its dictate has no authority to oblige categorically but only with caution. Only in this sense then one rightly affirms: *conscientia semper sequenda*. The necessity to obey a certain conscience can be expressed as follows:

It is the competent and necessary guide with which man has been equipped to know his destination and moral obligation. It is only through its mediation that everybody gains the necessary insight into the laws he is to respect in the order of creation and the tasks he is to fulfil in the service of God's plan for the world. Therefore, to disobey this faculty is to disobey the moral order, is to disobey the will of God, and this is sin.

Accordingly, St. Paul, asserts: “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (Rom: 14:23). One might think that since conscience is sometimes erroneous one has to question its binding force, and thus even go further to say that it may not be proper to obey conscience categorically. God himself would not require men to comply with daily life obligations under such great difficulty. However, in matters of greater, higher values, where not a grain of risk is to be taken so as to safeguard such important values, strict moral certainty is required

### **The Vincibly Erroneous and Lax Conscience**

A typical symptom of a vincibly erroneous conscience is when one is aware of being careless and irresponsible in his decisions. Such a person is always in a danger of committing error and sin. A person with vincibly erroneous conscience has the obligation to remove his doubtful state by searching after truth before he acts. If this is not possible for the moment, then he must postpone the action. If it is not possible to postpone the action, then a safer line of action has to be followed –the option that gives more probability to exclude the danger of erring and sinning.

A lax conscience is a sort of blunt conscience which on insufficient grounds judges a thing to be lawful which is sinful, or something to be a venial sin which is actually grave. It is a type of conscience, which is light hearted, not sensible or serious with regard to the gravity of the moral obligation. A tepid attitude will certainly result into a lax conscience. In this way a lax conscience is erroneous because its judgement is contrary to objective truth; i.e. judging a thing to be lawful which is objectively not, judging a sin to be venial which is objectively grave.

### **Perplexed Conscience**

Conscience is said to be perplexed when, confronted with two alternative precepts, fears sin in whatever choice it makes. It is a situation where one feels that he is confronted with two moral obligations at a time. It is therefore an erroneous conscience because it does not correspond to objective reality, i.e. no one is demanded to comply with two moral obligations at a time. It would contradict God’s wisdom and justice if one would be confronted with two equally binding moral demands at a time, of which he can fulfil only one.

A person with perplexed conscience must postpone the decision until the necessary information is obtained. If the decision can’t be delayed then what appears to be the lesser evil must be opted for, if this is still not possible let him simply choose either of the alternatives

### **The Doubtful Conscience**

Conscience is doubtful when it is uncertain about the lawfulness or obligation of an action, in which case it may suspend its judgement or incline to one side, but with the fear that the contrary might be true.

The doubt may be about the existence of law-moral principle (*dubium iuris*) or the existence of fact (*dubium facti*). Whether there is a law forbidding to contract marriage between a catholic and a non-Catholic Christian or not is a doubt about the existence of a moral principle –a law. Whether John’s tears are crocodile tears or not is a doubt of fact.

In this manner one can speak of doubt as speculative or practical. It is of speculative nature when it is in abstraction e.g. one asks himself whether killing a bandit is lawful or not when public authority such as police has proved incapable of containing him.

### **The Scrupulous Conscience**

Some signs of a scrupulous conscience

- Stubbornness of judgement: not easily convinced of one's mistakes, asks advice from many but is satisfied with one. Hard to obey.
- Frequent Change of judgement: serious doubts about the correctness of what one has already done.
- Impertinent reflections: tormented by the fear of mistakes or sins that one thinks may have committed as well as the respective consequences.
- Fear of committing sin in everything: overwhelmed by doubts about the lawfulness or moral goodness in every act one has to perform.
- Continuous anxiety with regard to the validity of previous confessions.
- Continuous anxiety with regard to the validity of previous confessions.

### **The Right to Freedom of Conscience**

The affirmation conscientia semper sequenda in the sense discussed above presuppose that one has the freedom to follow the dictate of his conscience. Since it is an obligation to obey conscience, it is necessary that one has the necessary freedom to do so. Furthermore, conscience is an essential aspect for the human person to enable him realise his destiny (objective order) according to God's plan. It is through conscience that one can meaningfully personalize objective truth, make objective end his subjective end. To say it once more, conscience enables one subjectively to identify what is good and what is evil and manifests the respective moral obligation, which is due.

### **Attributes of rightly formed conscience**

A rightly formed conscience is to be characterized by four attributes, that's it must be rational, autonomous, altruistic and responsible.

#### **Rationality of conscience**

Conscience has to be rational in the sense that it is able to assess people and situation objectively and without prejudice. It is able to grasp moral values and know how to pursue them in a given situation.

#### **Autonomous conscience.**

Conscience is autonomous or self-governing when it is able to help a person to make one's own decision, when necessary, with the help of others. And also, when it is able to stand firm in spite of opposition.

#### **Altruistic conscience.**

Conscience is altruistic when it is motivated by the needs and interests of one's fellow men and so able to decide to sacrifice self-interests for the sake of others when occasion calls for it.

#### **Responsible conscience.**

Conscience is responsible when it is able to accept the short term and long-term consequences of a moral decision. It is therefore not misled by mere sentiments either for oneself or others. It is able to take calculated risks for decision.

### **Necessity of the Formation of Conscience**

Conscience is not mere reason because it is more than a mere executive agent of pre-existent moral laws, whose only task is to apply the laws to concrete situations here and now. Otherwise, persons with the sharpest intellect ought to possess the best conscience, which is not the case.

### **How to form a good conscience?**

Knowing how to define conscience, what it is and what it is not, is not sufficient. Forming and informing a good conscience is a necessary part of conscience. It would be wrong to think that our conscience is sufficiently formed by the time we leave our childhood or leave adolescence or even leave middle age. The formation of conscience goes on throughout lifetime.

Conscience must always comport well with good reason and divine law. The process of forming our conscience is the on-going, consistent search for a more penetrating understanding of God, ourselves and the world around us, so that we might live our lives well. In the formation of conscience, the word of God is our “vade mecum” the light for our path; in it we find constant nourishment especially in the daily mass and divine office. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord’s cross that we must look into our conscience and see if it accuses us of our wrongdoing. Furthermore, formation of conscience must be assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit indeed by witness and advice of others and be guided by the authoritative teaching of the church.

The formation of conscience is a continuous conversion to what is true and to what is good, it is not only a renewal of the mind, so that we understand God, ourselves and the world better, but it is also a renewal of the ‘heart.’ It is the ‘heart’ converted to God and to the love of what is good which is really the source of true judgements of conscience. Christians on the other hand have a greater help for the formation of conscience in the Church’s Magisterium as the Second Vatican Council affirms “In forming their consciences the Christian faithful must give careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the Church, for the Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth.

### **THE FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE IN VIEW OF THE CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CONTEXT.**

Africans are aware with regards to the question of what is good and right and what is wrong and evil. Africans have a deep sense of right and wrong and evil in human conduct, in the course of years this moral sense has produced customs, rules laws and taboos, which are to be observed in each society. Their moral conduct can be embedded in their systems of behavior and conduct.

Africans moreover, form their conscience in various ways of which obliges them to the natural law of God of doing what is good and right and avoiding what is wrong and evil. Some of the determinant factors for the formation of conscience in the contemporary African context are as follows:

### **Ethnic diversity**

In Africa there are various Ethnic groups, which have contributed to the formation of conscience whereby the presence of these groups can offer a person a broader perspective in life. Cooperation has helped to lessen tribalism through this way people of Africa tend to forget their differences and become united as they face the common challenge while directs them to do what is good and avoid what is wrong. Moreover, African communities continue to evaluate moral life with regard to the formation of conscience in view of tribal norms. There is no ignoring the fact that tribalism is a form of disunity that contributes

to the deformation of conscience, the misuse of tribal identity has played a notable role in corrupting Africa remarking about the issues of pluralism and conflict in some African countries. Therefore, modern Africans promote unity in diversity while in times of crisis people tend to forget their differences and unite in order to face the common good which may lead to the formation of conscience.

### **African Tradition Values**

It is stated that some of the element of culture practiced in the past centuries are no longer apparent but the values and philosophy, which inspired them, are often held in great respect. There are tradition African values, which still persist as foundations in the formation of conscience. In spite of the culture of the modernity, formation of conscience in Africa considers carefully the African imaginations because consciously or unconsciously it still has a great influence on people's norms of judgment. The African custom of blood pact of relationship created and facilitated a real allegiance of two persons to each other, "This blood pact no longer continues in modern Africa, it is not practical, But the African values of deep relationship and bonding continues in Modern African societies and extended families, thus the traditional practical does not exist but the values do.

### **Migration**

In Africa, migration is one of the factors, which contribute in the formation of conscience; it has a repercussion on one's conscience. It is a moral force in the contemporary Africa which reinforce achievements motivation as different groups in the migrant population are particularly ready to adopt the complexity of values in others culture, in this context there is a sense in which one's conscience is formed. It is a fact that when people interact each other conscience is formed depending on the pattern of motivations varying across cultural groups and which are learned in the interaction process whereby action are mobilized toward some good acts which leads into the right motivation or goals in life. Thus, it becomes a contributive factor in the formation of conscience

### **Family Education.**

Most African families are concerned with the proper formation of their children within their respective families. In an atmosphere of love, children learn more quickly on the true scale of values, which integrate the totality of the person such as the values of justice and care.

Formation of conscience of an African child aims at achieving autonomy through cooperative activities in relation to mutual respect. The child needs to be helped to judge actions in view of forming conscience in moral development, the techniques and curricular of religious education always grows with the child.

### **Enculturation through Christian conscience**

Enculturation is understood as the insertion or introduction of the gospel message into a particular culture so as to transform and to elevate that culture and enable it to be the medium of expression of the Christian life or Gospel proclamation. Inculturation in the formation of Christian conscience in modern Africa has always to take account both the traditional African values and modern values, the absence of traditional values results in an identity crisis and deformation of conscience.

### **Conclusion**

The study of moral theology, conscience, sinful nature of man, ministration of angels is necessary to man's

understanding of his inner nature, a nature, which will remain a mystery to human reason. As Christians, we must proclaim man's sinful nature to sinful men so that they may implore God's mercy in their need! Also, ministration of angels to a believer is very important as it gives a clue on how safe you become to survive against the devil and his agents during salvation time in earth. All these is a concern for amoral norms to a Christian to live the life of repenteth and hate sin as gives a clue to a believer what is good to do and what is bad not to do it.

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