

St. Francis of Assisi Parish **RCIA** Wakefield, Rhode Island 02879

## ***WALKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT: MORAL ISSUES***

### **I. Introduction:**

**A.** Catholic morality *centers on the command* given by Jesus in the Gospels “to love one another as I have loved you.” Our words and actions must be based on this teaching. The term morality derives from the Latin word *moralis*, which means custom.

**B.** In the Hebrew Scriptures (*the Old Testament*), the Hebrew people followed the Covenants established between themselves and Yahweh. The Hebrews were assisted in these Covenants by *the Law*: the Ten Commandments of God and laws established by Moses (*Exodus, Deuteronomy 5 and Leviticus*). Jesus, the Son of God, did not do away with the Hebrew law. Jesus fulfilled, built upon, and perfected the Hebrew law: “Love the Lord, our God, with our whole heart, mind, soul, and body and love your neighbor as you would love yourself (treat others in the same way you would like to be treated). (*Mk. 12: 30-31, Lk 10: 27, Mt. 22: 36-40*). The above two Commandments (which are called the Great Commandments of Jesus) were part of the Law of Moses and the moral code of Israel (*Dt. 6: 5, Lv. 19: 18*).

**C.** Jesus adds a new perception to the **responsibilities of love**: be ready and willing to devote your life to others with the spirit of love. Christian **love and concern** for others is critical to our growth in the Spirit of God. We are a **family** of believers, thus, we see the spark of God’s creation in our neighbors. Jesus’ morality calls us to: **trust** in Him and His Gospel message, reject sin and **repent** from it, and to **seek** salvation through prayer and following His teachings.

**D.** The Holy Family of God is a model for the institution of the Church. **To be a moral person**, Catholic Christians must follow the beliefs of their faith and perform good works. We must seek to do God’s will while recognizing our ongoing responsibility to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

### **II. Morality and Human Dignity:**

**A.** Endowed with an eternal soul, an intellect, and free will, the human being from conception is destined for eternal blessing. (*CCC # 1711*).

**B.** Mankind is obliged to follow the moral law, which urges them “to do what is good and avoid what is evil.” This law makes itself heard in a person’s conscience. (*CCC # 1713-14*). Because of original sin, mankind is inclined to error and evil in exercising their freedom.

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### **III. Guidelines for Growth in Christian Morality**

**A.** The basic and primary guidelines for growth in the Holy Spirit as a moral person are to first accept the: Ten Commandments; Scriptural and Church Tradition; the Beatitudes: *Matthew* 5: 3-12; the teaching of the *Magisterium* (the Bishops collectively agreeing on issues of faith and morals); participating in the Corporal and Spiritual works of mercy (they are listed at the back of your *Compendium of the Catholic Catechism*, and attempting to emulate the virtuous lives of the saints, etc. *Okay, that is a tall order* (!), but we all must try to do this during our lives, understanding that we are weak sinners, and realizing that this is why we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) to heal us when we fall (like St. Peter).

**B.** Walking with the Holy Spirit requires that you have an educated and informed conscience; an educated and informed conscience possesses the ability to make a judgment of reason through which it (you) recognize the moral quality of a concrete act. (CCC # 1796)

**C.** The mature adult, with an informed conscience, understands that the morality of human acts depends on: the *object* desired; the *end* in view (intention); and the *circumstances* of the action (CCC # 1750). Saint Thomas Aquinas said, “An evil action cannot be justified by reference to a good intention.” Thus, **the end does not justify the means.** (CCC # 1759)

**D.** A morally good act requires the goodness of its object, the goodness of its end, and the goodness of its circumstances together working as a whole. (CCC # 1760)

**E.** There are concrete acts, which are always wrong to choose because their choice entails a disorder of the will, i.e., a moral evil. **One may not do evil so that good may result from it.** (CCC # 1761)

Deacon P. Iacono/ March 2009



