



Moral Theology

SETON HOME STUDY SCHOOL

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Course Manual

THE303_19A

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Revised May 2019

Outer Cover: *Jesus Christ the King*

Inner Cover: *The Coronation of the Virgin*, by Diego Velázquez

WEEK THREE**Day 1**

Study Chapter 3 in preparation for the Chapter 3 Review.

Complete the Chapter 3 Review, pp. 31-33 in the textbook.

Parent: Using the Answer Key that is included in this Course Manual, please grade your student's answers to the Chapter 3 Review. Please record this grade in Section A of the appropriate Quarter Report Form and send it to Seton at the end of the quarter, or you may submit this grade to Seton online from your MySeton page.

Day 2

Begin Chapter 4. The Judgment of Conscience.

Read and study pp. 35-41 in Chapter 4, up to the section "An Erroneous Conscience." Learn the definitions of **conscience**, **true conscience**, **pride**, **watchful conscience**, and **tender conscience**. Review the definition of **intellect**.

God gives us the principles of the Divine Law through His Holy Word and through His Holy Church. Our conscience is *not* meant to take the place of God, His Word, or His Church. Our conscience is meant to help us apply these principles to the specific situations we face in our life.

Conscience can be thought of like a muscle. If we do not form our conscience, it can become ineffective. Like a weak muscle hidden under several layers of fat, our unused conscience may be hidden under several layers of disordered attachments and passions that disguise themselves as our conscience. When we allow that to happen, we are not actually following our conscience at all. We are just following these disordered attachments and passions. We are doing what we *want* to do, and *claiming* that we are following our conscience. Ever since our first parents committed the original sin, human beings have been trying to act like they were "gods" who can decide for themselves what is good and evil (Genesis 3:5). But we cannot *decide* what is good or evil; we can only *discern* it by placing our trust in God and listening to Him.

We need to get our conscience "in shape," so that we will have a true conscience that consistently makes correct judgments about what is right and wrong. In other words, **we need to form our conscience**. The textbook discusses several excellent practices that can help us do this. If we follow these practices, we will strengthen our conscience. Gradually, with God's help, we will free ourselves from the disordered attachments and passions that have obscured the true voice of our conscience. We will know the truth, and the truth will set us free (John 8:32).

Day 3

Read and study the section "An Erroneous Conscience," pp. 41-45 in Chapter 4. Learn the definitions of **erroneous conscience**, **culpably erroneous conscience**, **culpable**, **hardened conscience**, **inculpably erroneous conscience**, **scrupulous conscience**, **scrupulosity**, and **confessor**.



Have you ever looked closely at a little baby? There is a beauty and innocence in a baby that is truly precious. What will that baby be like in ten years, twenty years, forty years? How do some people go from being an innocent little baby to being someone who is hardened of heart? The answer is: little by little. Don't let that happen to you. Ask God to help you to be a good person, and then sincerely try to be the best person you can be. Don't be scrupulous, but don't resign yourself to being lukewarm either. When you commit even a small sin, admit it, repent of it, and immediately turn back to God, trusting in His mercy. Don't let venial sins pile up and become a way of life for you. God wants you to be a saint, and you *can be*, with His help. Receive the sacraments frequently, and He will increase His grace in you.

Read the sidebar “Two Consciences Awakened” on p. 42. It is amazing how, with God's grace, a person can turn his or her life around, the way Aglae turned her life around. When that happens, God often moves that person to help others turn their lives around too, just as Aglae helped Boniface turn his life around.

Day 4

Read and study the sections “A Certain Conscience” and “A Doubtful Conscience,” pp. 45-48 in Chapter 4. Learn the definitions of **certain conscience**, **dictates of conscience**, **doubtful conscience**, and the **principle regarding obedience to authority**. Make sure you know the ten rules discussed on pp. 47-48 for applying the *principle regarding obedience to authority*.

We are living in a time when the religious liberty of Christians is under attack. At some point in your life, you will likely be asked by someone in authority to do something immoral, something that offends Our Lord Jesus Christ. When that time comes, you will have to make a choice about what honestly is more important to you: pleasing God or something else.

Jesus said that we are to “seek first His kingdom and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). If we want to be His disciples, we must be committed to doing what is right, even when we need to give up something in this life in order to do so. We should ask God to give us the grace to be faithful to Him always. We need wisdom. We need courage. We need the love of Christ in our heart. We need to care more about pleasing God than gaining the praise of others. We need to be persons of integrity and good moral character at all times, even when it is difficult or requires sacrifice.

Day 5

Study Chapter 4 in preparation for the Chapter 4 Review.

Complete the Chapter 4 Review, pp. 49-51 in the textbook.

Parent: Using the Answer Key that is included in this Course Manual, please grade your student's answers to the Chapter 4 Review. Please record this grade in Section A of the appropriate Quarter Report Form and send it to Seton at the end of the quarter, or you may submit this grade to Seton online from your MySeton page.

WEEK FOUR

Day 1

Begin Chapter 5. The Elements of Morality.

Read and study pp. 52-54 in Chapter 5, up to the section “Object Changed by Circumstances.” Learn the definitions of **moral good**, **moral evil**, **elements of morality**, **object**, **intention**, **end**, **circumstances**, and **moral quality**.

Sometimes people have good intentions, but *what* they do is still evil. Good intentions are not enough. Even if someone has a noble goal, it is not acceptable to use evil means to reach that goal. In order for an act to be morally good, all three elements of morality (the object, the intentions, and the circumstances) must be good.

Day 2

Read and study the sections “Object Changed by Circumstances” and “Intrinsically Evil Acts,” pp. 54-57 in Chapter 5. Learn the definitions of **intrinsically evil act**, **moral absolute**, and **human embryo**.

The section “Intrinsically Evil Acts” is very important. Please make sure that you carefully read this section and that you understand it. Some acts are *intrinsically evil acts*, and some are not. Intrinsically evil acts are evil by their very nature; therefore, they are evil always, everywhere, and in all cases. It is never morally permissible to commit any of these acts.

Day 3

Read and study the section “The Principle of Double Effect,” pp. 57-59 in Chapter 5. Learn the definition of the **principle of double effect** (see the Glossary for the complete definition). Review the definitions of **object**, **intention**, and **circumstances**. Make sure you know and understand the four conditions that must be met in order for an act to be morally permissible according to the principle of double effect.

The textbook presents an example of a case in which the principle of double effect would apply. Carefully read this example. The four conditions for an act to be morally permissible according to the principle of double effect are repeated on p. 58, with explanations given in bold about how each of these conditions is met in the example. (**NOTE:** The paragraph just before this numbered list on p. 58 mistakenly mentions “five conditions”; it should say “*four* conditions.”)

There is an important truth stated in the United States Declaration of Independence: “All men are *created* equal” (emphasis added). Every human being has *equal* dignity and value under God, from the very moment when he or she is created, and therefore the *same* right to life as every other human being.

There cannot be any “exceptions” to the right to life of every innocent human being. It is never morally acceptable to intentionally kill an innocent fifty-year-old man or woman. It is never morally acceptable to intentionally kill an innocent seventeen-year-old teenager. It is never morally acceptable to intentionally kill an innocent ninety-year-old elderly person. It is never morally acceptable to intentionally kill a five-year-old child. It is never morally acceptable to intentionally kill a preborn baby. It is *never* morally acceptable to intentionally kill *any* innocent human being, whether by abortion or by any other means. **Every human being has the same right to life as every other human being.** We are all created equal, and we all have equal value and dignity as human beings created in the image and likeness of God.

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