

Homily Notes
Fr. James Flynn
Sunday, August 28, 2011

Romans 12: 1-2

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.

**Do not conform yourselves to this age
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and pleasing and perfect.**

Moral evil - concerns the disordered nature or defect of a voluntary action (also known as a human act) that in some way fails to correspond to the will of God, i.e., I commit a moral evil when I do something that goes against God's will.

Start with God: If Moral evil is doing something that goes against God's will then it naturally follows that I must know God's will. Without God there is no justice/ethics/morality because we have no basis for morality and those who can most effectively force there will get to make the rules for right and wrong based on their own whims.

In order to begin to come up with a moral decision making process it is important to ask yourself:

- Where did the notion that one thing is right and one thing is wrong come from? If we are simply a more complex form of pond scum how did we get our consciousness and conscience?
- Does right and wrong even exist if there is no God?

Any argument for a moral society that does not base itself on God must be ruled by threat of force (i.e., Russia, China, Cuba, etc). The desire to please God is simply replaced by the desire to gain favor from the rulers of the state and/or not to be punished.

However, if we believe that God is Love and He desires us to be whole, holy and complete then it moves from a negative (avoid Hell) to a positive (Be in the presence of perfect Love (God) forever.)

Where should We Turn for Moral Guidance?

Most of us know what is right and wrong. We don't need to ask for outside sources, it is written in our heart that has been informed by our faith, parents and surroundings. However, there are certain things in life that are widely accepted and practiced that are against God's will, so it is important to do some research before you make a decision.

Scripture - If moral evil is defined as doing something that goes against God's will then our first source of information should be His Divinely Inspired Word... Scripture.

- The Bible is full of information of what God wants and doesn't want us to do. The Old Testament has many stories of how God's people turned against Him and the consequences of their actions and the New Testament shows how we are to live through the very experience of God living in our world and giving us an example.

Catechism of the Catholic Church - The Catechism is broken down into an easily identified system that makes knowing God's will very easy. The Table of Contents and the Index make it easy to look up particular topics and the Catechism will give you quotes from Scripture, writings from early Church fathers and other Church documents for further reading. Everyone should own and read the Catechism!!!

Church Writings - These include Council Documents, Papal Encyclicals and writings from the early Church fathers. You can easily google a topic like "Papal Encyclicals or Church Councils concerning family life, abortion, death penalty, dignity of women, etc.." This is a very easy way to get started.

God wants us to know the best way for us to live and He wants us to know His will for our lives.

God gave us Scripture and the Church so we don't have to guess what is right and wrong.

If we follow the teachings of God as given to us through His Church we will have a good and holy life we can be proud of. When the Lord calls us home we can stand in front of Him with humility and confidence that he will open the gates of heaven to us.

Living a holy life doesn't mean that bad things won't happen, it means that we will respond to the struggles in our life in a holy way that won't cause us or anyone else harm.

It is easy to be a good Christian when things are going our way, it is far more difficult to be a good Christian when things turn against us and following God will actually cost us something, but this is the true test of our faith and if we face adversity with confidence and trust that God will take care of us then making the tough and unpopular choices is much easier.

We are no different then non-believers if we sin because things are difficult or don't go our way. We show our true faith when we stare down adversity and persecution and do the will of God in every situation.

