

FORMING OUR CONSCIENCE I

The process defines the results.

Every four years when election time comes upon us the perennial issue of “forming our conscience” arises as the necessary preparation in order to make moral choices. Of course forming our conscience is not just about voting, but about making the choices we are called upon to make throughout our lives. But voting in the general election seems to bring this issue out of obscurity and into the light as we prepare to go to the polls. The Church teaches that we are to vote and to make choices in all areas of our lives by means of our consciences, and that our consciences form the “bottom line” in our decision making process. There is no higher tribunal than the dignity of our moral conscience. The only qualification is that our conscience be formed in the light of the Word of God. These first six articles in this series will be about the formation of conscience from the classic Catholic perspective, but then I hope to write about the broader topic of how we make moral choices from a “moral psychological” point of view. All of this comes into play as we approach the ballot: Can we vote for this or that candidate who holds views and has a voting record that is inconsistent with moral teaching of the Church? Since no candidate or initiative is perfect from a Catholic perspective, it is required that we make our decisions to either vote for a candidate, or refrain from voting in a race where the choices are both contrary to our Faith and our conscience.

IHM Pray for us.

Fr. Jerry