

Moral Choices I

This week we resume the Pastor's column. I had written previously about forming our consciences to prepare to vote, and now I would like to reflect on "making moral choices" from a more psychological view. Fr. Jerry

Why are we so divided by choices?

I have been reflecting on the formation of conscience, so now I must ask "Why are we so divided by choices we must make in politics and religion?" Why can't we all just "get along?" We certainly see that our present society is more polarized today than perhaps at any time in the recent past. Further it seems that there are common "assumptions" about what is reasonable and even obvious in our choice making, but is that accurate? Perhaps such obvious assumptions have led us to conclusions about others and their positions that are unhelpful? For example when thinking about making choices we can easily assume that another person who comes up with a different conclusion is either ignorant, or misinformed. The underlying assumption is that my process for making moral judgments is obvious and that as a mature and morally developed person I make choices in a reasonable and obvious way. I look at the facts, and as a scientist draws inferences from experiments I draw conclusions based on "reality." Therefore anyone who disagrees with me is deluded [that is a "dummy"] or worse delusional [that is crazy]. In the midst of disagreement the temperature rises and the person who dares to conclude differently from the politically or religiously orthodox consensus is denounced as perverse or even evil. Listen to the rhetoric of the recent political debates and see if I'm not correct. Perhaps one of the reasons we can't "just get along," is that we suspect that anyone with whom we disagree must really be nuts; but that doesn't open the door to communication.

IHM Pray for us.

Fr. Jerry