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Message from the Spiritual Advisor: Reflections on Conscience

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Reflections On Conscience

A term much in use in the oral and written communications of today is “Conscience.” In the work entitled Making All Things New, the Higher Institute of Catechetics, Nijmegen, points out that a better education in the Faith, not just instruction, is necessary for this renewal. A deeper understanding of Conscience is part of that Christian formation. The following excerpt might be helpful.

“Conscience is not primarily an organ for judging what is evil, but one to which I here and now recognize and fulfill the good that is to be done. The Lord is holy and He wants us to be holy. This is His great plan of salvation for me to be holy as I am holy.” This holiness of the living God, that was revealed in all its splendor in Jesus Christ, is the firm pivot of my conscience. The holy living God speaks here and now directly to me. His law was not only engraved on stone but lives in the hearts of all men, it is the hidden presence of God in us.

“From this presence we may not divorce conscience. Conscience is a voice within us but, at the same time, transcending us. The Holy Spirit lives in our hearts, and in our conscience. It is He who enlightens our mind and moves us to what is good and even to what is heroic. Through Him we already possess the holiness of God, but as yet only in capacity, as a taste for what is good and holy. This capacity comes alive by being confronted with the values of the world and men around us. It is in the encounter between myself and these values that I hear God’s voice.

“Hence conscience may not be isolated from the religious foundation which gives it a divine dimension. Conscience is the organ for the good, still more for the holiness, that consists in love. It is the instrument by which God’s Spirit makes me see God’s will: what does God want of me at this moment in the present situation?

“But this means also that man must learn to have an eye for the situation, for the possibilities and opportunities that the situation contains for the realization of what is good. With respect to the formation of conscience, this means that it is absolutely necessary to explain at once to the awakening conscience of youngsters that moral goodness has its foundation in the earthly reality of things and men themselves. On the other hand, however, we would render a disservice to them if we did not also, just as early, orientate that goodness Godwards.” How best to accomplish this today, for children and adults, needs to be answered soon, and well.

“Do not extinguish the Spirit, but test all things: hold fast that which is good. Keep yourselves from every kind of evil” (1 Thes. 5:19).

Father Kenneth Mark Kinnunen

Family Life and Sex Education Program at NFCPG Annual Meeting in Denver

PROGRAM FEATURES DRS. MARY CALDERONE MAX LEVINE AND JAMES SEMMONS

A comprehensive program on family life and sex education will be presented by the National Federation of Catholic Physicians’ Guilds at its annual meeting in Denver, Colorado, November 28-29-30, 1969.

Dr. Mary Calderone, Dr. Max Levine, and Captain James Semmons, among others, will appear on the program.

The NFCPG annual meeting will be held at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver, immediately preceding the AMA Clinical meeting. The Board of Directors of the NFCPG will meet on Friday, November 28. The Family Life and Sex Education program will be held all day Saturday, November 29. The annual business meeting for guild delegates will be held Sunday morning, November 30. The AMA meeting begins Monday, December 1.

The timeliness of the sex education program should attract a large audience of physicians, clergy and laity. Dr. Charles V. Zarleno, Denver, the program chairman, has announced the following tentative program:

“Sex Education and the New Morality”, By Dr. Max Levine, New York, New York, one of the outstanding authors on this subject today.

“Sex Education in Elementary and Junior High School”, by Dr. Mary S. Calderone, New York, New York, the Director of the Sex Information and Educational Council of the United States (SIECUS), an organization which is in the forefront of the sex education controversy in the United States today.

“Sex in Late Adolescence and Marriage”, by Captain James P. Semmons, MC, USN, Chief of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, U.S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, California. A career Navy doctor, Captain Semmons has written extensively on this subject, has exhibited his works at most national medical meetings, and authored the lead article in the May, 1968, issue of Linacre Quarterly, an issue devoted to the discussion of Family Life Education.

“Psycho-sexual Development of the Preschool Child”, by Dr. Lewis Barbato, Director of Student Health, University of Denver.

“Sex Education and Religion”, by Father Robert Syriane, Lakewood, Colorado.

In addition, panel discussion and question and answer periods will be included on the day-long program, in an attempt to involve as many members as possible.

A final printed program, advance registration form, and room reservation card will be mailed to all guild members.