

**Knights of Columbus Alberta-Northwest Territories
Formation Program-November-2021
Conscience and the Common Good.**

Opening Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray:
“Our Father...”

The Reading

(To be read by the Leader)

In October we stated that the formation of one’s conscience is an ongoing part of our successful journey to the Promised Land. My comments this day refer to, but are not limited to the present dilemma, a not insignificant number of the faithful find themselves dealing with. Well-formed conscience is essential to each and every one of God’s children, regardless of what side of the particular discussion they find themselves. In the case of our present-day question, to vaccinate or not to vaccinate, the Alberta Bishops have noted several considerations that should be part of all our process of conscience formation and decision making.

In the case of whether to be vaccinated or not, have I read the most recent and relevant medical data and scientific information offered by the medical experts in their field of expertise? It is important that I explore both sides of the discussion objectively. If I read only material that I agree with, (that experts have written), this is not an objective formation of conscience exercise. Are my sources ethical, accurate and above reproach in their truthfulness? Brothers, the internet is a very scary place. Anybody can post anything and there is no process in place to empirically verify that the information presented has truth and integrity to it. From a moral perspective, this is why it is important to trust what our Bishops offer. They are our shepherds, and their sole purpose is to assist us in getting to heaven. They have access to a far greater array of expertise than you or I do in most areas that concern us.

What gives me peace in following the leadership and direction of our Bishops is that it is very much their own salvation that is part of this process. “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, (Mk. 9, 42).” Our Bishops have absolutely nothing to gain and everything to lose by misleading the faithful in the area of conscience and morality. As previously stated, they also have the ways and means to a far greater and more competent panel of advisors and expertise than we as everyday faithful parishioners have access to.

The Reflection

(To be read by the Leader)

I am not an advocate of the “pray, pay and obey” cliché. However, we do need to trust in something. When push comes to shove, I choose to trust in the teaching of the Church and our Bishops when it comes to matters of grave importance, particularly when they revolve around the areas of morality and conscience formation. Finally, we need to avail ourselves of the expertise that is available and coming from a source we trust. Do we understand the information we are being presented? If we do not, we need to be humble enough to ask assistance from sources, friends, people; whom we trust. We need to understand the information/data we are reading, in order to make good well-formed conscience decisions.

As Catholics, as men and women who live in an ordered society, we are obligated to adhere to the social teaching of the Catholic Church in collaboration with the law of the land. Particularly as it pertains to acting in good, well-formed conscience, and for the common good of the society that we are all part of. “Our concern must always be for the welfare of both others and ourselves. A proper balance between rights and responsibilities is essential to a well-ordered society, which upholds the common good, (ABS).” In a family situation, sometimes we make difficult decisions because though they may require sacrifice on our part, we know that the decision made will be for the betterment and overall good (common good) of our families.

We need to respect our civil authorities within this context. “Authority is exercised legitimately if it is committed to the common good of society, (CCC 1903, 1921).” “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God, (Mt. 22, 21).” Our government authorities may not quote scripture when they lead us, or make decisions that govern us, but the common good is the moral imperative that should guide them. My Brothers, I write what I write not to convince you that one way is better than another way. I write to ensure that we are using the proper tools to come to informed decisions that are for our good and the good of the greater community. We truly are, all in this together.

Meditation Period

(The Leader now invites the members to spend a few moments in silent reflection, as the above text is not meant to be a ready-made answer but a starter for personal reflection on the theme.)

Fraternal Sharing

(The leader now invites the members to share with their Brother Knights any relevant thoughts that came to them during the meditation period.)

Closing Prayer

(Recited by all)

Let us pray:

“Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.