



HOW DOES GOD GUIDE MY LIFE?



GOSPEL



ANSWERS

LOOK AT THE BIRDS IN THE SKY; THEY DO NOT SOW OR REAP, THEY GATHER NOTHING INTO BARN, YET YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER FEEDS THEM. ARE NOT YOU MORE IMPORTANT THAN THEY? CAN ANY OF YOU BY WORRYING ADD A SINGLE MOMENT TO YOUR LIFE-SPAN?
- MATTHEW 6:25-34

SAINTS & INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

ST FRANCIS SOLANUS

St Francis Solanus had a life that was full of ups and downs. He nearly died of the plague but God spared him and while en route to Peru the ship he was on crashed and he almost drowned. But God wanted Francis to be there to help the men who were left stranded on the boat and he stayed with them until they reached safety.



MONTSE GRASES

For Montse Grases, God guided her life by using the people and circumstances in her everyday life. Her parents raised her in the faith. She met good friends with values at her youth group and grew in her faith. Before her death from cancer, she was at peace feeling like she had lived a life that pleased God.



TEAM DISCUSSION

After reading over the YOUCAT numbers on the following pages, how do you think the Youth Catechism answers the question of the week? Were there any words or ideas that you did not fully understand that you would like to understand better?

ANSWER IN YOUR OWN WORDS:



YOUCAT NUMBERS FOR THIS WEEK



#49 DOES GOD GUIDE MY WORLD AND MY LIFE? Yes, but in a mysterious way; God guides everything along paths that only he knows, leading it to its perfection. At no point in time does something that he has created fall out of his hands. God influences both the great events of history and also the little events of our personal life, without reducing our freedom or making us mere marionettes in his eternal plans. In God “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). God is in everything we meet in all the changes in our life, even in the painful events and the seemingly meaningless coincidences. God wants to write straight even with the crooked lines of our life. What he takes away from us and what he gives us, the ways in which he strengthens us and the ways in which he tests us—all these are arrangements and signs of his will.

#50 WHAT ROLE DOES MAN PLAY IN GOD’S PROVIDENCE?

The completion of creation through divine providence is not something that happens above and beyond us. God invites us to collaborate in the completion of creation. Man can reject God’s will. He does better, though, to become an instrument of God’s love. Mother Teresa during her lifetime strove to think in this way: “I am only a little pencil in the hand of our Lord. He may cut or sharpen the pencil. He may write or draw whatever and whenever he wants. If the writing or drawing is good, we do not honor the pencil or the material that is used, but rather the one who used it.” Although God works with us and through us also, nevertheless we must never mistake our own thinking, planning, and doing for the working of God. God does not need our work, as though he would lack something without it.

#260 WHY DID GOD DISPOSE MAN AND WOMAN FOR EACH OTHER?

God disposed man and woman for each other so that they might be “no longer two but one” (Mt 19:6). In this way they are to live in love, be fruitful, and thus become a sign of God himself, who is nothing but overflowing love.

#286 WHAT IS FREEDOM AND WHAT IS IT FOR?

Freedom is the God-given power to be able to act of one’s own accord; a person who is free no longer acts under the influence of someone else. God created us as free men and wills our freedom so that we might decide wholeheartedly in favor of the good, indeed for the greatest “good”—in other words, for God. The more we do what is good, the freer we become.



CONQUEST WEEKLY ACTIVITY GUIDE



#287 BUT DOESN'T "FREEDOM" CONSIST OF BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE EVIL AS WELL?

Evil is only apparently worth striving for, and deciding in favor of evil only apparently makes us free. Evil does not make us happy but rather deprives us of what is truly good; it chains us to something futile and in the end destroys our freedom entirely. We see this in addiction: Here a person sells his freedom to something that appears good to him. In reality he becomes a slave. Man is freest when he is always able to say Yes to the good; when no addiction, no compulsion, no habit prevents him from choosing and doing what is right and good. A decision in favor of the good is always a decision leading toward God.

#288 IS MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING HE DOES? Man is responsible for everything he does consciously and voluntarily. No one can be held (fully) responsible for something he did under coercion, out of fear, ignorance, under the influence of drugs or the power of bad habits. The more a person knows about the good and practices the good, the more he moves away from the slavery of sin (Rom 6:17; 1 Cor 7:22). God desires that such free persons should (be able to) take responsibility for themselves, for their environment, and for the whole earth. But all of God's merciful love is also for those who are not free; every day he offers them an opportunity to allow themselves to be set free for freedom.

#289 MUST WE ALLOW A PERSON TO USE HIS FREE WILL, EVEN WHEN HE DECIDES IN FAVOR OF EVIL?

For a person to be able to use his freedom is a fundamental right based on his human dignity. An individual's freedom can be curtailed only if the exercise of his freedom is detrimental to the freedom of others. Freedom would be no freedom at all if it were not the freedom to choose even what is wrong. It would violate the dignity of a man if we did not respect his freedom. One of the central duties of the State is to protect the liberties of all its citizens (freedom of religion, of assembly, and association, freedom of opinion, freedom to choose one's occupation, and so on). The freedom of one citizen is the limit to the freedom of another.

#306 WHY ARE FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY VIRTUES?

Faith, hope, and charity, too, are genuine powers-bestowed by God, of course—that a person can develop and consolidate with the grace of God so as to obtain "the abundant life".

#290 HOW DOES GOD HELP US TO BE FREE MEN? Christ wants us to be "set free for freedom" (see Gal 5:1) and to become capable of brotherly love. That is why he sends us the Holy Spirit, who makes us free and independent of worldly powers and strengthens us for a life of love and responsibility. The more we sin, the more we think only about ourselves and the less well we can develop freely. In sinning we also become more inept at doing good and practicing charity. The Holy Spirit, who has come down into our hearts, gives us a heart that is filled with love for God and mankind. We avail ourselves of the Holy Spirit as the power that leads us to inner freedom, opens our hearts for love, and makes us better instruments for what is good and loving.



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#309 WHAT IS CHARITY? Charity is the power by which we, who have been loved first by God, can give ourselves to God so as to be united with him and can accept our neighbor for God's sake as unconditionally and sincerely as we accept ourselves. Jesus places love above all laws, without however abolishing the latter. Therefore St. Augustine rightly says, "Love, and do what you will." Which is not at all as easy as it sounds. That is why charity, love, is the greatest virtue, the energy that inspires all the other virtues and fills them with divine life.

#295 WHAT IS CONSCIENCE?

Conscience is the inner voice in a man that moves him to do good under any circumstances and to avoid evil by all means. At the same time it is the ability to distinguish the one from the other. In the conscience God speaks to man. Conscience is compared with an inner voice in which God manifests himself in a man. God is the one who becomes apparent in the conscience. When we say, "I cannot reconcile that with my conscience", this means for a Christian, "I cannot do that in the sight of my Creator!" Many people have gone to jail or been executed because they were true to their conscience.

#305 WHAT ARE THE THREE SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES?

The supernatural virtues are faith, hope, and charity. They are called "supernatural" because they have their foundation in God, are directly related to God, and are for us men the way by which we can reach God directly.

#297 CAN A PERSON FORM HIS CONSCIENCE?

Yes, in fact he must do that. The conscience, which is innate to every person endowed with reason, can be misled and deadened. That is why it must be formed into an increasingly fine-tuned instrument for acting rightly. The first school of conscience is self-criticism. We have the tendency to judge things to our own advantage. The second school of conscience is orientation to the good actions of others. The correct formation of conscience leads a man into the freedom to do what has been correctly identified as good. With the help of the Holy Spirit and Scripture, the Church over her long history has accumulated a vast knowledge about right action; it is part of her mission to instruct people and also to give them directions.

#308 WHAT IS HOPE? Hope is the power by which we firmly and constantly long for what we were placed on earth to do: to praise God and to serve him; and for our true happiness, which is finding our fulfillment in God; and for our final home: in God. Hope is trusting in what God has promised us in creation, in the prophets, but especially in Jesus Christ, even though we do not yet see it. God's Holy Spirit is given to us so that we can patiently hope for the Truth.