

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

THE CHOICES WE MAKE...

Recently a young man that I knew from a former parish came to see me. Actually, he attended the parish grammar school; and then about five years ago, I performed his wedding on a beautiful day in May. I thought he had a very bright future ahead of him with a beautiful young wife. Well, that's what I thought but I've been wrong before.

This man who shall remain nameless, asked me to perform his baby's baptism. Unfortunately, the child that he had was not with his wife. As we sat and chatted in the rectory, I discovered that he had split with his wife sometime before. After that, he had a "fling" with someone else, conceived a child and had the baby aborted. Then he met the current girlfriend, and she was the mother of this wonderful baby boy who I baptized here just a few weeks ago.

Well, I told this young man in the bluntest possible language that he had been a "boob" to quote a priest friend of mine and that he really had made some pretty bad choices in the last few years. Obviously, he needed to go to confession desperately!

We might ask ourselves, "Why do we make wrong choices?" Well, it does go back to the reality of original sin and its effects in our lives. The Catechism of the Church tells us this: "By our first parent's sin, the devil has acquired certain domination over man, even though man remains free." What this means is that we are wounded and often enough inclined to do the less than noble thing.

Even the great saints experienced this struggle. Saint Paul once wrote, "The good that I want to do that I do not; rather I do the evil..." Saint Augustine struggled mightily with chastity in his life before he became a Christian. He admitted one time that he prayed this way, "Dear God, make me chaste, but not right away!"

All of us are confronted with choices every day of our lives. Some of the choices that we have to make have no moral bearing whatsoever. For instance: should I choose vanilla ice cream, chocolate or strawberry? No moral choice there-it really doesn't matter! But then there are serious decisions in our life that we have to resolve. Decisions like: "Should I lie to get this job?" "Should I take those drugs?" "Should I cheat on my husband or wife?" The list could go on and on. These are the choices that have moral and spiritual consequences for us..

To make the right choices we need to be in touch with the Lord and His grace. Ignorance of Christ and His teachings, the bad example of other people, enslavement to our passions and extreme selfishness lead us to make errors of judgement and moral conduct.

Our job as Catholic Christians is to form our conscience properly and to try to abide by the laws of God. It is not easy to do this in a world where permissiveness has become the order of the day and our standards have come down. In any sport like basketball, baseball or football you have to follow the rules. The rules are there so you can play the game, compete and have fun. Without rules in a game, you're going to have chaos and confusion. The same is true in the game that is known as "life."

God's rules are the Ten Commandments. If we follow them, we will be victorious in the eternal contest. Please pray for the young man that came to the rectory. Pray that the Lord will guide him and lead him along the right path in the future!

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome