PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITAS URBANIANA
Faculty of Theology

MORAL DISCERNMENT AND CONJUGAL LIFE

in the light of Amoris laetitiae

JOSE Ajo

Dissertation of Licentiate in Moral Theology

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Moral discernment is the process through which we discern the will of God in the concrete circumstances of our life, and live according to the will of God. Each and every single man does his action or live one’s concrete life in accordance with one’s conscience. There is a universal moral value which indicates us to do good and avoid evil. All other norms and other laws based on this universal principle. So, every single man is called to do good in his concrete life situation. Though the conscience and though the help of norms we are doing good and avoiding evil. So, it is important to know what is moral discernment and its importance in our life. Especially in the sphere of family life moral discernment has a great importance. Because our actions and way of living should be related to other members of the family. This research study makes an attempt to study the aspect of moral discernment in conjugal life in the light of Amoris Laetitia.

This research study is divided into two parts. First part deals with the moral discernment in its general sense and second part makes attention to the Church document AL to find out its implications to moral discernment in the conjugal life. The first part of the study creates a general view on moral discernment. It goes to the etymological significant of the word discernment, and its variety of meaning. As we know, moral discernment is a decision-making process. So, it has always its relation to
the conscience. Conscience is one of the important factors that allows an individual to take his decision. Our moral decision-making process and its effect in the concrete life situations, depends on our capacity to do discernment in the conscience. So, the formation of the conscience is important, because if the conscience is not well formed, it will lead to wrong decisions in life.

Adequate formation of moral conscience is important in the moral decision making or moral discernment. This research study mentions some important factors which form our conscience. How moral experience and norms help us to form our conscience and the importance of freedom and responsibility in this discernment process.

Context and situation is always different for different people. Each and every one makes one’s discernment in their own context. To know the context is always important. The social context and the personal context always affect one’s way of live and decision. But we cannot be stuck considering only the context, but the evaluation of the condition of the object and subject is also important for a moral decision making. Here we try to analyse what is subjectivity and objectivity and its importance. The moral decision making is possible through the objective moral judgement. How does objective moral judgement lead to the moral decision making?

Moral discernment in the life of a Christian is not the same as the one of a non-believer or of a non-Christian. This research study makes some attention to know the importance of Christian moral discernment. As we know, Christian moral discernment always depends upon the Gospel and the teaching of Christ. For a Christian, everything is centred on Christ, so it is important know the will of God (through the teaching of Christ) in every moment of Christian life.
Second part of the research study focus its attention to the Church document *AL* and its implications to moral discernment especially in the conjugal life. How does *AL* use the moral discernment as one of its key word to interpret conjugal life and family life? Pope Francis specify the importance of norms for the moral decision making in concrete life situation. How can we realize the value of norms or laws in our day today life? *AL* gives special attention to family and conjugal life, who are living complex situations in their life. The personal and pastoral discernment in the Christian life should lead them to realize their situation before God. *AL* indicates the importance of love and mercy in the process of moral decision making. What is the importance of love and mercy in the family life for the moral discernment? How do mercy and love help the pastors to make their moral decision in front of complex family situations?

Through this research study my primary purpose is to evaluate, in the light of *AL*, the importance of discernment for pursuing a successful matrimonial life. Through this study, I would like to mention, how the moral discernment is important in the family life especially in complex situations. How can a complex family situation become the opportunity to receive the mercy and love of God, through the Church?
PART ONE

SIGNIFICANCE OF MORAL DISCERNMENT IN GENERAL SENSE

1. DISCERNMENT: *DECLARATIO TERMINORUM*

Discernment is a common word, which we use in our day today life. But for many this word is something mysterious and they don’t actually understand what it really means. In spite of knowing this word as such, we make decision every day. Sometimes it appears that its mastery is the privilege of some, especially certain theologians, spiritualists, priests, gurus and monks.¹

Actually, everyone discerns since everyone make choices, for life requires all of us to make daily decision. And it is possible to do this in a more or less systematic way. […] Discernment is a process that allows a person to see, without confusion and ambiguity, what differentiate things. It should be immediately obvious that this process is necessary for making a choice.²

²Ibid.
1.1. **Etymological significance**

The word discernment means “keep perception or judgment.” The noun discernment comes from the verb discern. It means “to recognize or perceive clearly.” This verb discern has its roots from old French discerner, and from Latin discernere. In Latin, the word discernere is divided into two parts dis and cernere. Dis means apart and cernere means to separate. It means then to separate, to keep apart or to distinguish between. Latin word discernere usually refers to the mental process of judgment by which one perceives and expresses the difference between different realities; commonly it is related to the situations of the soul.

The word discernment is also related to the Greek word διάκρισις. Διάκρισις means deciding, judgment: the faculty of distinguishing. Διάκρισις is coming from the verb διακρίνω, which means to separate, to divide, and in the passive voice or related to person it means to come to a decision or – referred to a thing – to be decided. The word διάκρισις is used in spiritual sense as a capacity to distinguish the spirits, and this word has a great importance in the traditional spiritual life.

1.2. **Varieties of meanings**

Many people who use the term, discernment, do not necessarily use it in the same sense. In the more popular mind it is a synonym for prayerful inquiry or communal discussion. “The scripture basis for discernment is found in the religious

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4 Ibid.
5 Cf. Ibid.
discrimination of the Old Testaments prophets (Dt 18:21; 1 Sam 16:14).”

The New Testament distinguishes true from the false prophecy. Especially St. Paul’s speaks about the distinction between the way of Spirit and the way of flesh. He emphasizes the aspect of the charismatic gift of discernment of the spirits and the need to live according to the life of the Spirit. “In the early church understood discernment as a watchful and vigilant discrimination between good and evil. The theme was taken up by the second century documents The Didache and The Shepherd of Hermas.”

Origen, Athanasius, John Cassian used this theme of discernment in their works. “St. Thomas considered that the ‘discretion spirituum’ referred usually to an extraordinary gift of knowing future happenings or to a reading of the secrets of hearts.” St. Ignatius Loyola defines discernment as “the process by which we examine in the light of faith and in the connaturalism of love, the nature of the spiritual states we experience in ourselves and in others.” The theme or the word discernment is defined by different theologians and different writers in different ways.

St. Seldom spoke of our simple discretio but considered it part of prudence. St. John of the Cross looked upon discernment to be a sure, infused, deeply embedded knowledge of finite things, deed, events. Cardinal Bona (died 1674) wrote of an effort “to detect among various motions whether one inclination comes from the good or the bad spirit, whether this be in the area of morals or doctrines. In our day, O’Rourke considers discernment of spirit to be the ability to discern the origin of extraordinary phenomena. He is commenting on 1 Cor 12:10. Wall refers to discernment as a penetrating perception into spiritual matters and the spiritual condition of persons. Futrell defines

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12 Cf. Ibid.
14 Cf. Ibid.
our subject as a sifting through of interior experiences in order to determine their origin and to discover which ones are movements toward following the way of light.\textsuperscript{17} “The discernment and the act of moral discernment is impossible to program and difficult to describe. It involves perceptivity, discrimination, subtlety, sensitivity, clarity, rationality, and accuracy […] how we discern what we ought to do, whether we be morally flat-footed clods or moral virtuoso, is a complex process indeed.”\textsuperscript{18}

Discernment is included in every sphere of human life in different aspects. For example, those who are guiding the society should have the capacity to discern, but it is different from the person who is not in charge of any special duties. But his discernment is to discern the way he should live every day. Those who are taking care of the health of the society are to discern according to their responsibility. So, every human being capable of exercising their conscience has to discern to do good in every condition in which he is to live.

2. MORAL DISCERNMENT

Moral discernment is to search or to do Good in any present situation in accordance with the natural and universal law of do good and avoid evil. The decision which we are making in day today life is based on some laws or some kinds of truth which we are carrying with us. We can define these as morality. “A morality, or moral code, is a more or less systematic body of principles upon which ones’ decision are made. When we talk of moral experience, or of a man of strong moral principles, or of a moral order in one’s life, the term moral intend it has a practical sense.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 27.
In the Middle ages, St. Thomas Aquinas introduces an important distinction between simple *discretio*, which he rarely treats, and the charism of *discretion spirituum*, an extraordinary gift allowing a man who enjoys it to know future contingents or secret of hearts [...]. Simple discernment becomes, then a potential part of the virtue of Prudence. It intervenes when duty is not clearly indicated by the ordinary norms for acting.\(^\text{20}\)

“Discernment of what one ought to do, even among the clods, no doubt involves a perception of what is morally fitting in the place and time of action.”\(^\text{21}\) What is fitting to the situation might be different in different times. The difference always depends upon the different situation, and also different people. Some people are highly determined in their moral sensitivity by their emotions and values. Some highly distrust their emotions and values in their moral sensitivity.\(^\text{22}\)

Some make their decision in front of a problem through the knowledge and information they have and the moral principles and values they are carrying. According to these they are making the assessment of the problem and make the decision. Others especially value situations by their emotions: they feel deeply passionate about the current situation and make decisions. They make decision with their courage, they trust in their personal convictions, and follow it courageously. They take all the risk involved in the action.\(^\text{23}\)

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2.1. **Conscience in Moral Discernment**

“Etymologically, conscience breaks down to ‘con’ and ‘scientia,’ that is ‘with-knowing’. This moral knowledge is self-reflexive and socially connected, knowing that is accountable to my deepest self, to human communities, and ultimately to God.”

“Conscience is not a distinct faculty, because it integrates a whole range of mental operations. Sidney Callahan provides a useful definition: Conscience is a personal, self-conscious activity integrating reason, emotion, and will in self-committed decisions about right and wrong, good and evil.”

*Gaudium et Spes* defines conscience from the different perspective. It defines conscience as “the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths.”

The moral conscience is not the end of deciding what to do, or do Good or not to do Good. The moral conscience is a part of moral discernment, so it is included in the moral discerning process. Moral discernment is a decision-making process, in which we are making our decision according to our conscience. As we mentioned earlier we make moral decision according to the inner voice that we are hearing every day to do good and avoid evil. So, the conscience that leads us to make our moral decision. There are certain norms that are already formed by the community in which we are living. So that we have in our conscience some criterion to evaluate and to do Good and avoid evil.

There must be awareness that for no one moral discernment never stars from zero, because everyone is born with and shares a community *éthos* inside which moral truth in the various domains of life is already decoded and interpreted. Not that it is not possible to distance oneself from the common morality, but it represents, in any case, an

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25 Ibid., 123.
objective presence that comes as an already given condition to access the experience of personal morality through the decision of conscience.\textsuperscript{27}

In the moral decision making the subject is making the decision according to his conscience. Fuchs mention the moral conscience “as the intimate awareness to which the subject understands himself in his personal aspects and recognizes responsible for its own becoming. So, we understand that this responsibility is not limited to particular individual acts but the person as a whole: all actions must be able to be referred to the person that guides their decisions and their actions in view of a full and authentic realization of self.”\textsuperscript{28}

\section*{2.2. \textit{Adequate Formation of Moral Conscience}}

Conscience has a great role in the process of discernment. “This is a process of a continuous conversion to what is true and good, the search for who we ought to be for what we ought to do in faithful response to God’s call.”\textsuperscript{29} Formation of conscience is not a process or a study of certain rules to obey to and to live and act with, and we cannot finish forming our conscience within a given time or period of time. It is a long task; in other words, we can say it is a lifelong task, and also an ongoing process. An ongoing process of conversion.\textsuperscript{30}

The proper formation of conscience is not only about what to do what to do in a context but also about how to forma the certain type of person I ought to become. “The aim of forming conscience is not simply to inquire about the right thing to do by gathering information and thinking it over; it must also include the fuller development of a person’s moral character: one’s attitudes, motives, intentions, affections, and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} C. ZuCCARO, \textit{Fundamental Moral Theology}, Urbaniana University Press, Rome 2015, 307.
\item \textsuperscript{28} V. BACLIUS, \textit{L’agire, Tra virtù e opzione fondamentale}, Urbaniana University Press, Città del Vaticano 2016, 101. (My translation. Hereafter all other quotation that will be made in this work, from the text written in Italian, will be my translation).
\item \textsuperscript{29} J.M. GUSTAFSON, \textit{Theology and Christian Ethics},106.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Cf. Ibid.
\end{itemize}
“Conscience produces more than individual decisions; it enters into the self-constitutions of the person over time. Moral choices shape the character of the one who makes them insofar as they integrate personal character or retard moral development. We become what we do.”

2.2.1. Understanding of Moral experience

The greatest knowledge that we can attain in our life may be the knowledge through our experience. Indeed, experiences that we have in our daily life contribute somehow to our life, our behaviour, our way of living and our thinking. Experience could be different in different levels. Such as the experience that we have in our moral life.

In general sense experience is an awareness caused by a presence, a contact with things inner or outer. The thing may be an outer object, a tree or it may be nothing other than one’s inner feeling of wellbeing or illness […]. Experience implies a passivity with a vital response. It is both cognitive and affective, with the latter predominating; pleasant-painful, hard-soft, warm-cold, clear-dull. Though one may choose some experiences, there is an element in experience that is unchosen, something beyond our control. More briefly, we may say that experience is a received awareness of presence or the in-living of an object.

“Persons of moral seriousness do exercise discrimination in making judgments. They discern what they ought to do. Discrimination, or discernment, takes place not only in moral experiences but in other areas of human experience as well, such as aesthetic experiences.”

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31 Ibid.
33 T. DUBAY, Authenticity: A biblical theology of discernment, 27.
34 J.M. GUSTAFSON, Theology and Christian Ethics, 100.
which he had some moral experience that affects his decision process. Moral discernment is based on the experience that one has or had through his life. The obligation to follow the conscience presupposes that we have properly formed our consciences. Pinkaers mentioned the experience of repetition of good acts and adapted within the different virtues, so that the subject can gradually improve and perfect himself in his acts and also can rectify his errors. In this way the subject relates to his interior and exterior realities. The capacity to discern or making moral choices is based on moral experience.

Thanks to the experience acquired at the level of intelligence and action, knowledge of morality, itself universal like the laws or norms it studies, can reach its full development through the virtue of prudence, which is personal, and can be transformed into an active, experiential knowledge. Through virtue a kind of reciprocity is established between science and prudence, thought and action, reflection and experience.

The most fruitful moral experience is the one which arises from the action in conformity with virtue, accomplished through the choice of truth and goodness. Personal and concrete involvement in the knowledge and the realization of the true and good, allows us to obtain the necessary experience for proper understanding of ethical reality. For a moral theologian, the experience of faith does not intervene in addition to the moral, but it enlightens the life and the moral experience.

35 Cf. Ibid., 107.
37 Cf. V. Balcius, L’agire. Tra virtù e opzione fondamentale, 49.
38 Ibid., 50.
39 Cf. Ibid., 51.
2.2.2. Towards the responsible freedom

To act with conscience is required freedom: an action can be a moral only if accomplished with our freedom of choice and with responsibility. According to Gula, "actions that are not under our control cannot really be considered within the realm of conscience."\(^{40}\) There are actions which we cannot control and therefore they are out of our conscience. So, in such actions our responsibility is not included, because they are out of our conscience. Gula says that, "for example, we cannot be held responsible for a tree falling on our house in a wind storm. Such an act of nature is beyond our control. But we can be held responsible for how we respond to the destruction it brings."\(^{41}\)

"The biological, psychological and social sciences have certainly made us aware of how limited our freedom is. In fact, they have made us so aware that the modern day ‘out’ for immoral behaviour is often the claim to being victimized by some past experience."\(^{42}\) The way of thinking often visible in our days is to deny our responsibility toward an action and its effects. A conscience act should be an act which includes freedom and responsibility. "The great temptation is to say that, whatever my falling, is not my fault. Such and such happened to me and made me to be this way and to do these things; therefore, I can’t be held responsible. Such notion of determinism has profoundly diminished our sense of responsibility".\(^{43}\) Refusing the freedom that we have, means that we are afraid to accept the responsibility of the action.\(^{44}\) Real freedom is the exercise of our freedom according to our limits.\(^{45}\) When we become aware of our limits we will live freely within our limits. The freedom that I have does not mean that I can do whatever I would like to do. This type of thought will lead to relativism.

\(^{41}\) Ibid.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 60.
\(^{43}\) Ibid.
The freedom we have to act in conscience, then, it is not a license to do whatever we want. Rather, the freedom of a good conscience is the freedom of wanting to do what we ought to do because it is the right thing to do. Ultimately, our freedom to choose this or that, within limits, is fundamentally a freedom to choose an identity, to become a certain sort of person. We cannot do everything. Determining factors prevent that. But we can pour ourselves into what we do, make it truly our own, choose it as a genuine expression of who we are and aspire to become.\textsuperscript{46}

Freedom and responsibility go hand in hand. We should not make attempts to escape from our responsibility. According to Gula, “responsible freedom says, I choose to do this, because I want to do it. This is quite different from, I really should or I had better. These all indicates that someone else is really in control.”\textsuperscript{47}

\textbf{2.2.3. Place of moral norms}

Moral rules and principles have great importance in the process of discernment. “Rules can be understood as having a social function and generally a social sanction in morality. They are determination of what is definitely required and what is definitely prohibited in the community.”\textsuperscript{48} Rules are authoritative reference for the men to discern what they have to do in certain situations.\textsuperscript{49} “He discerns clearly and quickly that the situation in which he is to act is one in which his behaviour ought to be conformed to those rules that regulate the life of the community.”\textsuperscript{50}

“In different human situations, moral principles functions differently.”\textsuperscript{51} Moral norms or rules in different situations need moral reflections on it. According to Gula, moral conscience always depends upon the source of wisdom that is established in the

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} R.M. GULA, \textit{Moral Discernment}, 32.
\textsuperscript{48} J.M. GUSTAFSON, \textit{Theology and Christian Ethics}, 115.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 115.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 116.
society. Wisdom or the norms that are established in the society is depending upon the experience of the people who have taken such a discernment in certain situations.

As we have mentioned earlier, “in moral discernment nobody starts from a condition of tabula rasa. Everyone is, in fact, part of a specific moral tradition, of a community ethos.”\(^\text{52}\) This helps the individual to make his decision. “The person who is interacting with the community has progressively created a specific culture, including ethos, with a set of meanings and values that informs life’s way and this culture becomes for the person who is alive today, an objective material. It is like a house that, once built, becomes objective and imposes its space on constructor.”\(^\text{53}\)

2.3. **Contextualization of Moral Discernment**

Moral discernment is a process, which always depends upon the concrete, personal and social context. Everyone in front of a concrete situation is obliged to take a decision to do or act according to his conscience. So, when he makes moral decision he is influenced by his social condition, personality and especially his beliefs. Our sense of moral values and virtues are influenced by our relationships, by our interpersonal relations with our community, our friends, our relatives, etc.\(^\text{54}\) “Our interpersonal relation are the major influence on forming our values and our virtues on setting limits within which our freedom operates.”\(^\text{55}\) In our interpersonal relationships we realize that kind of person we ought to be, and we learn to accomplish that kind of acts we ought to do to be part of the community.\(^\text{56}\)

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\(^\text{52}\) C. Zuccaro, *Fundamental Moral Theology*, 316.

\(^\text{53}\) Ibid. 317.

\(^\text{54}\) Cf. Ibid.


\(^\text{56}\) Cf. Ibid., 58.
2.3.1. Social context

When we are rooted in a community we follow the moral values and virtues which the community stands for. “Psychology and many of the social sciences have stressed the radical degree to which group influences affect us. Therefore, our conscience is being influenced by the moral values of community.”

According to it we form our conscience and way of life. Every man in the world is part of a community. As we grow up, we are influenced by the beliefs and values which the community follows. So, we are not merely memorizing some rules for our behaviour, but we make our life in a way rather than in another, as we accept some images and values for interpreting day today life which is approved by our community and show how the community lives.

Every person is born into a social setting. In this setting an interpretation of reality and its values already exists and this is meditated to the nascent mind of the merging person. We are born not only into the world but into a world view, a particular world view in which reality has been defined and assessed in a certain way. […] We do not arrive with an independent worldview of our own. But we do arrive at a thirst for meaning and a need to make sense out of this world into which we have been abruptly projected.

Seeking moral values also a social experience. Our moral values and insights is tied with our context in our consciousness was formed. In a word, our sense of reality various according to our social conditioning.

What we know and how we know always depends upon our context. The sources from which we are forming our conscience are always different according to the cultures or the contexts. Our special relation to our family friends and our education in schools, colleges and universities helps to create moral values in us. All the community

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58 Cf. R.M. Gula, Moral Discernment, 58.
59 D.C. Maguire, The moral choice, 311.
60 Ibid., 312.
in which we are related may not be a group conveying moral values and virtues. It is upto me to take what is important for me, the formation of my conscience and my behaviour. The community ethos is not an ultimate word of morality. The community ethos is only one of the factors that enables us to make moral decision. The important factor which is more important for our morality is our conscience and our relations.

In the community, we may have been influenced by the life of some people, whom we call role models. We learn from them how they have made the decision and how they spent life according to their conscience, to do the will of God. “We learn how to act by paying attention to the decision-making process and to the moral actions of others—thus, the importance of role models and experts.”61 “For good discernment we need to test our judgments against the advice and perception of others whose experience and perspective we respect.”62

For a person who is related to the Church or in other words who is carrying Christian beliefs, there is something that indicates him how to form his conscience; indeed, in a Christian community there are so many factors that form the conscience of a Christian. “For a Christian, the words and deeds of Jesus are the ultimate norm of the moral life, the paradigmatic figure to which we turn to discover what it means to be a person and to live a life fully response to God.”63 “The words and deeds of Jesus are transmitted to us through Gospel and the Church. When we look to Gospels to see what kind of life Jesus lived, we can see how we ought to act with self-sacrificial love, even if we can’t tell precisely what we are to do. This tells us who are to become, as individuals and as a community.”64 The intention behind our action is important as it forms our personal conscience and behaviour. When we do a right action, which is

61 R.M. GULA, Moral Discernment, 68.
62 Ibid., 70.
63 Ibid., 60.
64 Ibid., 62.
morally recognized as just and seems to be good, but the intention of doing it is not good, the action will not be a good one. So, the intention of Jesus should be the intention of every Christian to live morally and to do the actions morally good.

The Church provides moral guidance through the teaching of Jesus and through its tradition. Every Christian is called to listen the teaching of the church, try to discern its truth, and incorporate it into the entire process of informing conscience and making decision.\textsuperscript{65}

\textbf{2.3.2. Context of situational reality}

In moral discernment, there is a “discriminating and accurate reading of the situation, and an understanding of the relations of elements of the situation to each other, and of its relation to other situations.”\textsuperscript{66} A person in front of a context chooses to make his decision in accordance with the human values. Goodness of the act is not depending only on the object of the decision, but on the moral value which the agent realizes in his conscience by doing the proper act.\textsuperscript{67} To discern in a situation one has to evaluate the hierarchy and the urgency of the moral value to be chosen, in comparison with the other possible moral values.\textsuperscript{68} Moral conscience helps us to evaluate the values in decision-making process in accordance with the major moral value, which is challenged in that context.

In the search for the decision to face the human values that propose a situation, the objective choice of value comes first of all from the sincere arrangement of harmonization the objective consistency of the good with the actual capacity of the subject to do it responsibly. Recognizing good as human value on the part of the subject

\textsuperscript{65} Cf. \textit{Ibid.}, 64.
\textsuperscript{66} J.M. GUSTAFSON, \textit{Theology and Christian Ethics}, 108.
\textsuperscript{68} Cf. \textit{Ibid.}, 74.
must necessarily be commensurate with its value for all others verified through shared experience.69

People sometimes are not able to make the right decision in a situation. The situation must be studied or morally evaluated with great attention and according with moral principles. “If we do not do a thorough investigation of the situation, we may miss some clues that point us in the direction of what is the right thing to do.”70

There is another approach to the question of analysing the situation. The situation must be evaluated with some questions; what, why and how, when, where, who, what if, and what else. Before we make a decision, we should keep in mind that, what we think is going to affect our attitude and behaviour towards the situation under consideration.71

In any rational decision-making process, the first thing that we must be aware of, is the situation or what is going on before we make a decision. The question is somehow related to what we ought to do.

If we answer the what? with an evaluation, such as ‘this is an abortion’ or ‘this is stealing’, then we do not have to go any further. We have already made a judgment about the morality of the action in question. If, however, we are not yet able to make a moral evaluation of the action and can only answer the question in descriptive, morally neutral language, such as “ending a life” or “taking someone’s property”, then we must go on to ask the remaining questions in order to unlock the moral implications of the situation in hand.72

There is difference between a description and evaluation. Gula speaks about this by giving an example based on taking life.73

We commonly distinguish between a murder and a homicide. Homicide is descriptive. It gives us a perspective without judging. We know there can be justified homicides, but

70 R.M GULA, Moral Discernment, 77.
71 Cf. Ibid., 78.
72 Ibid.
73 Cf. Ibid., 78.
never justifiable murder. Murder is an evaluative term. It always means ‘wrongful killing’. Ultimately murder may be the final judgment. But it would be premature to name the action of taking life as murder before we have examined the full context of the killing. So how we name what is going on makes a difference in how we respond to it.\textsuperscript{74}

The questions like ‘how’ and ‘why’ “are the gateway to the enormous amount of confusion that obtains in human thought regarding ends and means.”\textsuperscript{75} “So how we go about achieving our end ought to matter to us more than the fact of getting it. To sharpen the focus, we have to see how all the features uncovered by the reality-revealing questions relate one another, not just how the ends relate to the means.”\textsuperscript{76} Another question arise from the situation is ‘who’. This always refers not only to the ‘who’ of the agent, the one who is acting, but also to the ‘whom’, the one/ones whom is acted upon.\textsuperscript{77}

The question ‘who’ enters into the calculus of ethics to make us address the following realities: what is right for one person may be wrong for another. What is right for a person now may be wrong for the same person at another time. Some persons are, in ethical calculation, worth more than others. No two persons are the same. Persons are social by nature, not by choice. […] To put it more briefly, persons are relational, social, historical, and unique. Only if we know this we can do the work of ethics, which is a work of knowing what befits persons as they really are. What we say at this point relates to what we will say later about moral principles. We will then be speaking about the validity of universalizing and generalizing in regard to person. Here we are stressing the special claims of persons as they are found in their unrepeatable concreteness. As will be seen, this does not mean that principles are invalid but only that the validity of moral principles depends on clear perception of what is and what is not generalizable.\textsuperscript{78}

The question when and why usually speaks about time and place. The question when is used to indicate that timing of something is morally important as it belongs integrally to

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{75} D.C. Maguire, \textit{The moral choice}, 135.
\textsuperscript{76} R.M. Gula, \textit{Moral Discernment}, 80.
\textsuperscript{77} Cf. \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{78} D.C. Maguire, \textit{The moral choice}, 144.
the action. “When and where are also reality questions that may turn up essential and specifying circumstances.”

‘What if’ is the question that has an effect also in the future. The effects of our action may go beyond the immediate time and space. Certain types of circumstances make us act in accordance with the future, or in accordance with a foreseeable effect.

Moral responsibility means that we ought to look as far into the future as we can judge the impact of our behaviour. A great moral failure is short-sightedness. We fail to see the evil effects that we cause along with the good. Many of the effects of our actions are beyond our intention. Even though we are not morally responsible for all effects, we are responsible for those that we can and should foresee, even if we did not intend them. So, we ought to anticipate as many effects as possible.

As we mentioned there are particular situations in which we are always obligated to make a decision in accordance to our conscience. The choice we make in front of a concrete reality, should not be chosen only depending upon the effect that it has in the present time of the action, but upon the future effects which are going to be established by it. “‘What if?’ helps us to know the effect of the action in a particular situation. It forces us to measure the good and bad effects of our actions in other circumstances.

“Morality is based on reality, and the reality of our conduct has future implications.” The reality in front of which we are forced to make a choice also force us to answer the question of ‘What if?’. What else is the option that I could take in that situation? Gula explains this aspect with some examples.

What else can we do instead of using oil as our primary source of energy, of driving alone to work, of watching television as our primary source of entertainment, of working three jobs in order to maintain a luxuriant lifestyle, […], of taking pills for relief of tension, of capital punishment as our response to crime? Too often we make the

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79 Ibid., 150.
80 Cf. R.M Gula, Moral Discernment, 82.
81 Ibid.
82 Cf. Ibid.
83 D.C. Maguire, The moral choice, 150.
wrong moral choice, not because we are bad people, but because we are too unimaginative.\textsuperscript{84}

We cannot ignore the reality on which and in which we are forced to make a choice. It also depends upon our creative imagination to explore different options in a situation. We like to make our choices in a narrow way.\textsuperscript{85} So our possibilities to explore options and find the best choice in a concrete reality are become more difficult. “These, then are the reality-revealing questions that help us uncover morally relevant dimensions that define the situations to which we must respond. They help us to appreciate the special context in which we find ourselves and to appreciate those features of our situation that make for a moral difference in shaping what we ought to do.”\textsuperscript{86}

2.3.3. Personal Context

Situation analyses is not enough for making a choice or a decision. Moral discernment has its importance in analyses of a situation but it is not the only aspect we should consider when we are making a decision or doing moral discernment in a situation. The person who acts in the moral decision-making process is the subject of that process. The central part of moral discernment is the person who makes the decision, who is the agent of moral discernment.\textsuperscript{87} The person is in a society, is in the midst of a context, such as a family, he is member of a particular religion, member of a particular belief, is related to some kind of groups; all these things are the context of the process of making a moral discernment. He is obligated to respond to the situation in which he is related or rooted. Our moral action and moral discernment is always influenced by our beliefs and thoughts. “We act the way we do largely because the situations in which we find ourselves challenge us to reveal the beliefs we hold, the

\textsuperscript{84} R.M. Gula, Moral Discernment, 83.

\textsuperscript{85} Cf. Ibid., 82.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 83.

\textsuperscript{87} Cf. Ibid., 85.
image we have of ourselves, the ideals we aspire to, our perception of what is going on.”

Personal context of a person cannot be reduced into his beliefs, it also considers the person himself as a person. It is important that a good decision-making process is always depending upon one’s right evaluation of the things with his capacity to reason. This reason should be directed to search human values in the decision. “Moral decision is always placed in a historical context of life. This fact is particularly important in the concept of end-of-life. The ending command indicates a moral necessity, which man cannot accomplish with one act, but to which he can adequately meet with a constant process.” This process is always accompanied by the conscience.

Our beliefs about God are a great factor that influence our conscience for decision-making. For believers, in any religion, everything is related to God. And everything he ought to do is centred on God. In another way, we can say that God is the central point of his decision making, from Him one starts his decision-making process. “One may have another belief that could influence our moral choice. We have certain beliefs about the way social roles ought to be fulfilled. We have some convictions about who we are to be for one another and how we are to be towards one another.”

Another important factor in the personal aspect of discernment is imagination. It has a great importance in the moral action to do Good. “The imaginations are not a flight of fancy. It is the capacity to construct a moral world. By means of the

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88 Ibid., 86.
89 H. ROTTER, “Soggettività dell’esigenza morale”, in K. DEMMER – B. SCHULLER (ed.), Fede cristiana e agire morale, Cittadella, Assisi 1980, 244
90 Cf. R.M GULA, Moral Discernment, 93.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 94.
imagination, we bring together diverse aspect of our experience into a meaningful whole. It is how we make sense of things. ”

2.4. Moral Discernment: Towards an Objective Ethical Judgment

Moral decision making or discernment is a process of self-realization. It is based on the subjectivity and the objectivity of the action. Our moral actions are always judged by its goodness and correctness. It is difficult to judge a moral act with only the conscience of the agent, and we cannot judge moral act only by analysing the object of the action. Objective criterions are not enough to judge the correctness of the action but also certain conditions of the subjective constitution and the history of one’s own freedom. We must introduce a distinction and specify in what way the decision itself can be said to be good and in what sense it can be said to be correct.

It is clear that subjectivity is always conditional on objective aspects. It is like the union of body and soul in a person, so subjectivity and objectivity are not completely different, but combine and make each other possible. “The recent tradition of Catholic moral theology has expressed this awareness in an assertion: moral objectivity exists in transcendental subjectivity.” Moral discernment starts from analysing the moral significant elements or moral values which are presented in the object of the action of the agent. Therefore the distinction between personal goodness and the correctness of acting in the discourse on moral objectivity remains fundamental for judging the moral act.

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93 Ibid.
94 Cf. D. Abigente, Decisione Morale del Credente, il pensiero di josef fuchs, 72.
95 Cf. H. Rotter, ”Soggettività dell’esigenza morale”, 244.
96 V. Balcius, “Conflitto di valori e decisione oggettiva”, 176.
97 Cf. C Zuccaro, Fundamental Moral Theology, 308.
2.4.1. The sense of moral objectivity

There are two dimensions in the moral reality. Moral goodness and moral correctness. Personal goodness of the action is always depending upon the person and the fidelity to his own conscience in the face of recognized good. And the correctness of the action is always based on the exact evaluation and choice of the human values to be achieved.99 The sincere attempt to make a moral act is always a continue process in which the agent find the moral value in the object and insert it into the concrete action.100 “The guardian of moral objectivity is the person who, present to himself in his own conscience, is called upon to form the objective moral judgment on the concrete realization in relation to historical and relative values goods.”101

Every decision is always dependent on a certain legal tradition or based on the norms which are already formed in the society or in the community. Depending on one's own needs or experiences, man positively evaluates things and decide to do good, this judgment of the individual will always be depending on his subjective need and his subjective will. The morality of an action consists in the fact that the man decides and accomplishes his act according to the ultimate end of his life. An individual with his freedom and responsibility decides to act morally good, by attending not only the exterior aspect but the interior aspect of the action. When someone, assuming the responsibility of deciding freely, in conscience chooses to do the greatest good that is objectively possible in the circumstance. Deciding to act morally good, according to the value which is realized as greatest in that circumstance, the agent is realizing in positive terms his morality.102

100 Cf. V. BACCIUS, “Conflitto di valori e decisione oggettiva”, 177.
101 Ibid., 175.
102 Cf. Ibid., 194.
Consciousness with faith is oriented towards a correct action than a good decision, helping to decide the more human value. Moral value is always more human, because it does not consist in this or that good on concrete action, but rather in the relationship of the subject to the concrete good, it leads to self-realization of the person, to become more human.\(^{103}\)

2.4.2. **The pale of moral subject**

In every single action the subject does not only carry out a particular action but through the action, he also realizes himself as a person. The subjective element in judgment and human behaviour is not merely an emotional aspect but it is a phenomenon that results from the particular position of man in the world. Usually, in the ethical evaluation of concrete actions, the morally good act is associated with the personal goodness of the subject or the agent, consciously and freely engaged in acting responsibly with freedom. Human freedom expresses itself in external actions, and a morally good action depends upon personal freedom.\(^{104}\) In every action the subject is freely deciding his move towards the goal of his life. Every human decision must always be embodied in the goal.\(^{105}\) This realization of the agent as a person, makes visible changes in his life, in his behaviour and in his social living.

“In most of the cases, a good person normally tends to express his moral quality through correct actions.”\(^{106}\) The perfect human act not only indicates the personal honesty of the act, but also the current ability to choose the right way to act.

Actions that are truly in line with what is historically demanded from the external circumstances. In fact, in case such a commitment were go missing, you cannot hardly say you are dealing with a person who is morally good. At times, however, it is also

\(^{103}\) Cf. *Ibid.*, 196.

\(^{104}\) Cf. V. BALSCH, *L’agire, Tra virtù e opzione fondamentale*, 149.

\(^{105}\) Cf. H. ROTTER, ”Soggettività dell’esigenza morale”, 243.

possible that, faced with morally incorrect conduct, the person does not lose his morally
good character. The reason consists in the fact that action was driven by an invincibly
erroneous conscience and St. Thomas’ distinction between *volitum* and *operatum*.\textsuperscript{107}

We cannot make a distinction between the act and the agent, because they are related to
each other. The agent is immersed in the act, the agent becomes what he is doing.\textsuperscript{108}

To make a judgement which is objectively judged, it is necessary to have
sufficient knowledge of the objective condition of the subject, in other words to know
the objectivity of the subject. And it is necessary to evaluate the condition and the
ethically relevant elements in which the person is involved. Of course, we cannot reduce
these realities of man and his world to quantifiable and purely biological data. The
relevance of these realities is important, but we cannot forget that the capacity of man
goes beyond the data and material facts. Otherwise these material data without reference
to man would remain dumb.\textsuperscript{109}

Discernment in this sense seems like looking beyond the material data like an owl.
“The owl’s gaze penetrates the darkness of night and it is not fixed in a single direction;
with the rotational ability of his head, he can see all around without to move the rest of
his body.”\textsuperscript{110} In the discernment process the subject goes beyond the material data and
penetrates into its moral values which are most relevant in the particular situation, and
performs his action according to them. For a Christian, through the light of faith, he
penetrates into a reality.\textsuperscript{111} For a non-Christian are the universal moral values and
norms, especially his moral experience through which he formed his conscience, which
help him to penetrate into reality and to make a decision which is human.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 321.
\textsuperscript{108} Cf. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} Cf. V. BALCIUS, “Conflitto di valori e decisione oggettiva”, 180.
\textsuperscript{110} C ZUCCARO, *Fundamental Moral Theology*, 334.
\textsuperscript{111} Cf. Ibid.
2.4.3. The objective moral judgment and personal conscience

Each person has to keep the moral values which are presented in the object. In fact, the acceptance or rejection of moral needs always passes through the conscience of the person; if it is not passing through the conscience of a single person in his act, we cannot speak of an authentic moral life. Each and every moral value is expressed in norms realized and recognized in conscience.\textsuperscript{112}

The ethical judgement of an action is depending upon the sincere conviction of the conscience about correctness of the action to be done. This certainty of the correctness of the action to be done is the exercise of right reasoning in accordance with freedom and responsibility.\textsuperscript{113} “The True place of mediation between the formulated rules and the concrete situation, is the conscience of the moral subject. Its right formation and its correct judgment must help in the formulation of norms and, in general, of shared moral traditions.”\textsuperscript{114}

The conscience of an individual works as a director in making the discernment process. Conscience is always guided by the virtue of prudence. This helps to make decisions in the concrete situation. To be prudent means to do the best possible action in order to achieve the aim.\textsuperscript{115}

A personal conscience in front of an objective moral judgement in the case of conflict between different moral values, should evaluate the moral values in conflict to make a decision. The conflict between values is presented as the possibilities to act, it is depending upon the person who decides which is the major good to do. Sometimes it asks a hermeneutical approach to find out the relation between the reality and the

\textsuperscript{112} Cf. V. Balcius, “Conflitto di valori e decisione oggettiva”, 181.
\textsuperscript{113} Cf. Ibid., 184.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 185.
\textsuperscript{115} Cf. C Zuccaro, Fundamental Moral Theology, 332.
personal commitment. Personal commitment is important to accept the morale value which is more important and urgent.\textsuperscript{116}

In between the conflict of the values, an individual should make his decision according to the human value. Every decision should be made for the human value. So that individual should realize the doing good as human value. Moral values depend upon the relation of the subject with the concrete situation. When by the process of discernment we realize the moral value which has to be done, it becomes like a norm which is to be accepted and used to make moral actions.\textsuperscript{117}

In this discernment process, by realizing the moral values to be promoted, the person becomes at the same time subject and object of the act. The person reflects about his action and evaluates himself as an object between other objects in the world. This means that he is considering himself as individual in the midst of other realities in the world. This also leads to realize his proper morality and his moral life in the world.\textsuperscript{118}

### 3. Moral Discernment in The Christian Life

Most of the people, those who are living in a particular religious community and those who are keeping some personal beliefs, are always making their moral discernment according to their beliefs or based on their religious teachings.\textsuperscript{119} “The human process of discernment is no different among Christians. There are the moral clods and the moral virtues among Christians; nothing can guarantee that because a man has faith in God who has been disclosed in Jesus Christ he will be a man of excellence in moral discernment.”\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{116} Cf. V. Balcìus, “Conflitto di valori e decisione oggettiva”, 194.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 196.
\textsuperscript{118} Cf. V. Balcìus, L’agire, Tra virtù e opzione fondamentale, 111.
\textsuperscript{119} Cf. J.M. Gustafson, Theology and Christian Ethics, 108.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 109.
Christians have no special capacity or faculties that other men do not have. For a Christian, the moral conduct takes place in the light of faith. For the Christian discernment is the process of following Christ. He must not copy Him, but develop the personal interpretation of the master.  

A Christian makes his moral interpretation according to the revelations, which is expressed in the Holy scripture and in the Church. “For a Christian, the seriousness of his belief is not optional; The experience of the encounter with the person of Christ, is as such that he is experienced as a decision of conscience.”

The personal encounter with Christ changes the life of a person. St. Paul through his personal encounter with Christ had his way of life and interpretation of things changed. With that experience, St. Paul affirms that, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2,20). After this experience, St. Paul, through the process of conversion, was interpreting, deciding, living his life with Him.

If a Christian in front of a concrete situation, makes his decisions and does moral acts as a faithful, this means that he views things through the faith in Christ. This distinguishes the interpretation of a Christian from a non-believer’s or a non-Christian’s one. Christian decision making in front of conflict of different values always depend upon the moral values in the Gospel and the ethos of the Christian community.

Whatever the gifts of grace, the Christian community is receiving, are to be distributed and to be shared to all human mankind. Moral values which the Christian community carry on help even non-believers or non-Christians to make their discernment.

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122 V. BALCIUS, “Conflitto di valori e decisione oggettiva”, 198.
123 Cf. Ibid., 199.
According to his upbringing, the common man usually looks upon morality in one of two ways. Either it is a code of precepts and prohibitions or it is a vague subjective feeling of what seems right. In the first view morality is learned in the home and in the church. It is something given, clear, objective, covering most, if not all cases. In the second view morality is not properly learned at all. It is something one experiences in a given situation. It is not clear, not objective and it covers only one case at a time. Each man is his own judge.\textsuperscript{124}

Moral discernment always takes place within a community. The moral discernment of Christians takes place in the Christian community. The community allows its members to make discernment through moral discourses. This moral discernment in the Christian community is always based on the Gospel and the teaching of Jesus Christ. The teaching of Christ is conveyed through the moral discourse in the Christian community; in this way both minds and hearts of people can be trained to discernment and their capacities to make discerning moral judgements can be deepened, broadened, and extended.\textsuperscript{125}

\textbf{3.1. “IN THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL”}

“Christians have a particular perspective, or in other ways we can say they are in a particular relationship which in turn affects their self-understandings, their perceptions and interpretation of the world, and they have certain norms by which they discriminate what is right and good.”\textsuperscript{126} This interpretation is not something that relies completely upon man and his emotions, but it includes responsibility. Interpretation in the light of something means that there should be something upon which the interpreter can evaluate the situation and do discernment. The Christian interpretation is always based on the light of Gospel, that illuminates the world and the person.\textsuperscript{127} The word

\textsuperscript{124} T. DUBAY, \textit{Authenticity: A biblical theology of discernment}, 173.
\textsuperscript{125} Cf. J.M. GUSTAFSON, \textit{Theology and Christian Ethics},117.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.,110.
\textsuperscript{127} Cf. \textit{Ibid.},113.
discernment has different meanings in the Sacred Scripture. In the Old Testament, we
cannot see the word *discernment*, but the sense of it is used in the Old Testament.

The word ‘discernment’ is not used in the Old Testament. Nonetheless the central
themes of discernment are present throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Several texts deal
with the presence of spirits within individuals. Saul is influenced by a good spirit
(Samuel 11:6) and then by an evil spirit (1 Samuel 16: 14-23); seventy elders receive
some of the spirit bestowed on Moses so that they can share the burden of the people
with Moses (Numbers 11:24); and Egypt staggers from the spirit of confusion prepared
by the Lord (Isaiah 19:14). Various texts also discuss the need to distinguish among
spirits from other sources. This type of discernment is seen most vividly in texts dealing
with the calling of the various prophets (e.g. Amos 7; Hosea 1-3; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1;
Ezekiel 1-3). These texts taken cumulatively point to an incipient notion of discernment
in the Old Testament.

These basic themes of discernment are further developed in the New Testament. The
synoptic Gospels do not employ the term ‘discernment’ as such, but it is implied and
lived throughout the Gospels (e.g. Matthew 1:18-20, 4:1; Mark 14:36; Luke 1:35,
2:26). 128 St. Paul uses the expression ‘discernment’ as to express the need to do the will
of God. And he uses the term spirit like Good spirit and evil spirit.

By the time of St. Paul and St. John, each Christian is invited to be guided personally:
‘[…] be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good
and the acceptable and the perfect will of God.’ (Rom 12.1,2); ‘… proving what is well
pleasing to God. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful work of darkness…’ (Eph
5.10,11); “And this I pray: That charity may more and more abound in knowledge and
in all understanding: that you may approve the better things…” (Phil 1.9,10). Paul is
describing an interior experience of God’s Spirit, whose results are light, peace, charity,
acknowledgment of Jesus as the Lord. ‘But the fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace,
patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency,
 chastity’ (Gal 5,22.23). 129

723.
The Gospel penetrates our minds and hearts to view the world around us through the eyes of Christ. Christian discernment as much is about discerning what God is calling us to become and what he is calling us to do. The way through which we can find the will of God is the Gospel. The Gospel is a voice through which our Father speaks to us. It is also a light for discovering why and how Jesus Christ entered our world and gave himself to us; therefore we are also called to give ourselves to God and to Our fellow beings.\footnote{Cf. D.J. BILLY, “The Way of Discernment”, 41.} It means doing the will of God. Christian discernment, which is based on the Gospel is not like a computer program which offers solutions to moral problems. Rather it provides us an inner insight that we are doing the right thing, that we are following the will of God, or not.\footnote{Cf. M.R. PANICOLA, “Discernment in the neonatal context”, 724.}

Ernest Larkin points out that discernment “does not tell us what to do, since it moves on a different plane from the technical. But it does indicate whether or not we are moving in the right direction on the deepest level of our being, and in this way it enlightens our experiences, reinforces our decision, and concretizes our desire to find God in all things.”\footnote{Cf. Ibid.}

According to James M. Gustafson the Gospel is related to our moral life in different ways. They can be interpreted to provide a theological justification for the moral life. This interpretation is always depending upon the relation that we have with our Father. That means that this relationship should be understood and lived as a parental relation with God. The moral rules and norms, which are in the Gospel, can be applied to the present situation. And also, the Gospel influences us to become that sort of person that we are expected to be in the community.\footnote{Cf. J.M. GUSTAFSON, Moral Discernment in the Christian Life, Essays in Theological ethics, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville – London 1970, 41-42.}
As we know the Holy Gospel in fact presents the life and teaching of Jesus Christ in the period in which He lived on earth. So, Jesus made His teaching for the people and for their problems in that period. Today for a Christian the moral problems are always different in different places and therefore a mere application of moral norms may not be possible. So, the correct hermeneutical interpretation is needed for understanding the moral value, which Christ has taught through the Gospel. The holy Gospel presents the moral values which are applicable for today.

After all Jesus’ answers (while Jesus encounters a person in the Gospel), while not resolving the issues immediately at hand, will emerge as a hermeneutical element that will help to solve, according to the truth, what is a concrete problem. […] In the light of faith, the Christian learns to discern, in the wake of the Master’s intentionality, the sense of concretely living in the various ambits of life and, going beyond the strictly legalistic vision and mathematical model of casuistry, can find always new alternatives that come ever closer to the criterion of love.134

3.2. “IN THE LIGHT AND OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE” (cf. GS 46)

As humans, we consider our moral experience and the experience of our family, our friends, our community, to make our discernment. Through these experiences, we evaluate situations and make judgments. We analyse the rules, stories, the way of living laws of other societies or others aspects. When we are in a community we take into consideration all the things, which are guiding the community and the members in the community.

The life of a Christian is not different from this, because he is also a member in a community. As Christians, we turn to testimony of scripture, especially the words and deeds of Jesus, the religious convictions of our creeds, the lives of moral virtuosos, and

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134 C ZUCCARO, Fundamental Moral Theology, 335.
the informed judgment of theologians past and present who help to interpret the tradition of Christian life.\textsuperscript{135}

“The communal criteria for good discernment include Scripture, Church, community, and church authority. We look these criteria to see if our moral decision in changing circumstances are in harmony or disharmony with these fundamental sources of Christian morality.”\textsuperscript{136}

As \textit{Gaudium et spes} 46 says, the experience of every man in his particular situation should be evaluated in the light of Christ. The present situation in which the humanity is struggling to make decisions, like family life, relations in the marriage life, and all the particular issues which are related to human society and especially to the Christian community is to be viewed in the eyes of Christ. Our human experience should be driven by the Scripture and by the church. That helps us to evaluate if moral decisions which we make are against the scripture, against the church or against our community.

“The personal criterion for good discernment is interior harmony and integration. We look to this criterion to see if our moral decision in particular situation create agreement or disagreement among the whole network of human capacities-faith, reason, emotion, intuition, and imagination.”\textsuperscript{137} When we are experience certain kind of peace, love, kindness, faithfulness in Christ when we are making discernment, we are doing the will of God.\textsuperscript{138} When a Christian makes a decision in accordance with his conscience, which is enriched by the Gospel and the teaching of the church, he can experience the joy and peace of Christ within him.

\textsuperscript{136} M.R. PANICOLA, “Discernment in the neonatal context”, 739.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 740.
\textsuperscript{138} Cf. Ibid., 740.
For a Christian discovers the will of God through prayers and his participation in holy sacraments. The prayer is an important part in Christian life because it helps us to touch the deepest part of ourselves in order to know the will of God. This is not a kind of recitation of prayers but it is the way to live a relationship that makes us open to God’s presence. In this way, we can see what is going on inside and outside ourselves.139

The experience through the sacraments is always a great power that helps us to make our discernment in our day today life. “It would be useful to consider sacraments as hermeneutics and nourishment of moral life lived in the experience of faith.”140 Especially the sacrament of Eucharist illuminates the motivation of discernment in the light of faith. Holy Eucharist always generates great power to make the moral discernment in the light of faith.141 Holy Eucharist is an encounter with Christ, from that encounter each Christian faithful realizes the moral value which is more human to be done in a concrete situation.

140 C. ZUCCARO, Fundamental Moral Theology, 326.
141 Cf. Ibid.
PART TWO

MORAL DISCERNMENT ACCORDING AMORIS LAETITIAE

1. DISCERNMENT AS A KEY WORD IN AMORIS LAETITIA

The word discernment has a central, even critically important place in the development of “The Joy of Love,” Pope Francis’ post-synodal apostolic exhortation on family. While referring to discernment, Francis uses a powerful language to explain its meaning. Discernment is not merely the human actions corresponding to a general law or rule, rather it is indeed an assured and full fidelity to God in the concrete life of a human being. So, to understand and appreciate the document, we need an accurate understanding of discernment\textsuperscript{142} in order to be able to discern.

The word discernment is used in the document Amoris Laetitia [AL] about 50 times. Discernment seems to be a key word in the magisterium of Pope Francis.\textsuperscript{143} He uses the word discernment in AL by citing the Apostolic exhortation Familiaris Consortio of John Paul II. The 84\textsuperscript{th} paragraph insists the pastors to know that, for the sake of truth, they are obliged to exercise careful discernment of the


\textsuperscript{143} Cf. Ibid.
situations. This affirmation highlights the need of discernment in different situations to find the solution for the problems.\textsuperscript{144}

In AL, the figure of discernment was dealt with by the theoretical and practical perspective. The theoretical question can be restored by the following questions: the relationship between the practice of conscience exercising on historical and social data and the general rules of the moral law which inspire our action especially in the sphere of family and pastoral ministry; today, the possibility to configure the relationship between law and inner dynamism of the person; to live discernment, the intimacy of one’s conscience, within ecclesial communities remains a crucial issue. More decisively, the pastoral vision concerning the moral and social situations of fragility is put forward.\textsuperscript{145}

The Pope generously draws on both Scripture and the tradition to identify the goal of discernment. We practise it to know the will of God in our life which is our salvation, the good of every single man. At the moral level the human being has no other way of understanding the human values (what is good for men) without the recta ratio. That means, the right reason, which helps the execution of freedom as a responsibility for the well-recognized good as major good (moral value). Here AL is not speaking about a problem-solving method of discernment but rather of a life in process, of a person who is in a journey to God. Discernment then sorts through the stages and dimensions of that journey to identify where and how God is inviting that person or community to conversion and life.\textsuperscript{146}

\textsuperscript{144} Cf. J. GRANADOS – S. KAMPOWSKI, \textit{Amoris Laetitia, Accompagnare, discernere, integrare}, Cantagalli, Siena 2016, 123.
The document primarily and directly is “about the family and the challenges that the families face while striving to live out their faith commitments in the contemporary world; the exhortation also offers tremendous resources for the faith lives of all Catholics.”\textsuperscript{147} Especially the eighth chapter makes a clear view about the necessity and the importance of discernment especially in the multifaceted sphere of conjugal life. Discernment and accompaniment presume that the Christian life, including the Christian life lived out in marriage and families, is a journey. Even when that journey is in the process of a crisis the persons who belong to those families and marriages need discernment and accompaniment. There is also another foundation for discernment and accompaniment, especially in difficult situations. The document suggests the discernment with the word \textit{mercy}, that is to discern with the logic of mercy.\textsuperscript{148} The members of the family and the married couples are invited to do decision-making process to listen the will of God in every moment of their life, in accordance with their conscience. \textit{GS} 16 specify the importance of conscience. It defines conscience as the sanctuary of man, where he hears the voice of God.

In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, avoid that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths.\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{149} VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, II Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world, \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 16 (December 7, 1965): AAS 58 (1966).
The importance of conscience for making the moral decision is strongly indicated in the document. The word conscience is used in *AL* about 20 times. The document indicates the importance of the formation of conscience.

*AL* emphasizes the primary responsibility of conscience for the moral life, indicating that the crux of the moral life is discernment in one’s particular context. In the process of proposing this account of Christian morality, the exhortation significantly develops the catholic understanding of conscience and moral discernment.\(^{150}\)

The document indicates the importance of conscience and discernment in the family life while dealing with the aspect of parenthood, it is an invitation to responsible parenthood with discernment. The importance of conscience and discernment is appearing strongly in the document when it speaks about the possibilities for including divorced and remarried Catholics more fully in the life of the Church.\(^{151}\) Pope Francis explains that individual conscience needs to be better incorporated into the Church’s praxis, even if they live in certain situations which objectively do not embody our understanding of marriage. Here the document suggests the examination of the conscience of the married couples to listen to the will of God. This integral listening to God’s call helps us to be present and attentive to the whole person, the whole marriage and the whole family.

Discernment and the decisions of conscience are absolutely personal in character, but they are not private matters isolated from the community of faith: indeed, they are an ecclesial event. Every Christian should do his discernment with the Church.\(^{152}\) Here, we have to put attention to the objective moral judgment. It gives space to the personal conscience, especially to the inter-personal conscience of the couple, including the objective conditions of the persons, as an indispensable

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\(^{150}\) C.M. KELLY, “The role of moral theologian in the Church: A proposal in the light of Amoris Laetitia,” 924.

\(^{151}\) Cf. *Ibid*.

place for the discernment of the real good, which is objectively possible. And it raises the need of inner responsibility to do good (moral value); This good is always and necessarily researched in relation to the framework of the existing ethos. It includes ethos of the Christian community, ethical norms and magisterial instructions. It is to avoid the danger of individualism and not overestimating the space of individual conscience.

The Christian is not called to a set of rules but rather to a relation with God. AL suggests discernment as a relationship with God in the midst of limits. Indeed, the relation which one has with God makes them capable of making the decision in every moment of their life especially in the difficult situations.¹⁵³

As Amoris Laetitia is at pains to point out, this understanding of discernment and of the working of conscience does not abrogate the need for moral norms, nor does it devolve into relativism. Instead, this conception of the moral life as an ongoing relationship with God presumes the clear identification of an absolute and unchanging ideal.¹⁵⁴

The document is not simply speaking about family life and marriage but, even more, it represents a commitment of the whole church to accompany families. This is the fundamental context of discernment. And since the core of the Gospel is love, an authentic discernment will be manifested and evident in the love it generates, love of God and love of one another.¹⁵⁵

AL also is also concerned about the fact that we cannot have absolute certitude about our processes of discernment, whether in our personal spiritual journey or regarding questions of marriage and family life. But the possibility to make decision with God and with the church is always available. The church cannot

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.
deny anyone from doing good. It is almost always possible to offer mercy and to help people discern how they can do better.\textsuperscript{156}

2. MORAL DISCERNMENT AS A GIFT

Discernment is gift of the Holy Spirit. The holy spirit illuminate the heart of every men to know the will of God in his life, that means the moral value. The holy Spirit provides us the strength to decide Good and always do well in our life. It is mentioned in the introductive part of the rite of penance. The discernment of spirits is the intimate cognition of God’s work in the hearts of men, a gift of the Spirit and the fruit of charity. “I am speaking the truth; I belong to Christ and I do not lie. My conscience, ruled by the Holy Spirit, also assures me that I am not lying” (Rm 9:1). It is the gift of the Spirit, because only the Spirit can help us to know the will of God, or in other words only the Holy Spirit can draw us to the Father. It is the fruit of charity because God is love and, just by putting oneself in the way of love, it is possible to talk to him and able to know the will of God.

Each and every person has received the gift of discernment from God. It is important to keep in mind that even if so we all must collaborate in the study and should exercise the capacity of discernment. And it should be executed with human effort and especially with prudence and in accordance with the church doctrine.\textsuperscript{157}

Discernment cannot be done without any base on laws, because we make discernment also (but not exclusively) in accordance with the norms. The norms which are already given to us and which we are obtaining from our moral experience help us to exercise the gift of discernment. The law as such is a valuable gift. In AL Pope Francis


\textsuperscript{157} Cf. P. SCHIAVONE, Il discernimento, Paoline, Milano 2009,146.
speaks about the valuable gift of law. For Pope Francis, “the law is itself a gift of God which points the way, a gift for everyone without exception; it can be followed with the help of grace, even though each human being advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God and the demands of God’s definitive and absolute love”.\(^{158}\) This expresses the importance of valuable teaching on moral values which the Church carries and makes everyone able to exercise the gift of discernment.

In *AL* it is equally affirmed that moral decision cannot be reduced to a mere application of the norms. “For this reason, a pastor cannot feel that it is enough simply to apply moral laws to those living in “irregular” situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives.”\(^{159}\) The moral laws, the gift, they are part of the life to be lived in grace. The gift of law and the gift of a discerning conscience must not be neglected. In *AL* 301 the Pope speaks of the general validity of the norm, and of its increasing indeterminacy the more it goes towards concreteness; this is why discernment is required. In addition, it is also important that even the same norm may result differently in different situations.

### 2.1. **Value of the Norms**

The general rules do not have their power in themselves but they derive it from the values (goods) that protect and promote. The value of a norm can be understood by the individual by evaluating the norms through the individual conscience in a specific situation. In *AL*, the Pope mentions the importance of keeping the value of the norms.\(^{160}\) “It must be said that, precisely for that reason, what is part of a practical discernment in particular circumstances cannot be elevated to the level of a rule. That would not only


\(^{159}\) *Ibid.*, 305.

lead to an intolerable casuistry, but would endanger the very values which must be preserved with special care.”

Norms are necessary part of each and every society. At a general level, they translate the indication to do good and avoid evil. Each and every norm is different in different contexts of life and different societies. The norms are being developed through reflection and in a living context. Especially for a Christian, norms have their base in Christ teaching. The decision that we are making is the result of consideration of the norms that we have achieved through our life. But the decision is never the pure application of a general rule to the concrete case. The Pope speaks about the sufficient reflections on the rules to solve the problems which is currently visible in the Christian community. Pope Francis, thanks to his formation in spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, points out the practical dimension of discernment: discernment is not confined to the contemplative or intellectual functions, but it speaks of decision and action, giving a moment of synthesis of the human freedom, in the sense of self-understanding as well as of concrete determination. It is true that general rules set forth a good, which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in their formulation, they cannot provide absolutely for all particular situations. At the same time, it must be said that, precisely for that reason, what is part of a practical discernment in particular circumstances cannot be elevated to the level of a rule. That would not only lead to an intolerable casuistry, but would endanger the very values, which must be preserved with special care.

Values, in the case of the family are: loyalty, solidarity, dedication; tenderness, courage, and confidence, etc.; they are equal at a universal level and as such should be guarded with extreme care. When discernment is used, these values have to be dropped in

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161 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 304.
163 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 304.
thousands of faces and thousands of shades. Only discernment is able to bring to unity the universality of values and norms and the peculiarities of situations.164 “Discernment must help to find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits”.165

Each norm has a value on which the norm is being developed; so the first thing is to understand the value of the specific norm to apply in our day today life. Norms, which are entrusted to the family and to the conjugal life have its basis always on the teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ. So, each member of the family is invited to live with the values, which are given by the Church. But there are certain situations in which the norms are not enough to make appropriate decisions for living in the family according to the will of God. There are many situations which lead the family and conjugal life into crisis. The crisis in family and especially in the conjugal life always depends upon the most important value of love. In the family and in the conjugal life the members experience and express the love of God. Mindful of the fact that we all have our own limits and perfection always belongs to God, it is He who gives the Grace to overcome the difficulties.166

Certainly, the human limit always puts anxiety, we all wish to be perfect; Conversely, the Christian is not required to leave his own limit, rather accept the limit, with a hope that even in it the person who is living in limits will be redeemed and loved by God167 “In the life of married couples, even at difficult moments, one person can always surprise the other, and new doors can open for their relationship, as if they were

165 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 305.
166 Cf. P. COLOMBO, “La via del discernimento per le famiglie, a un anno dalla Amoris Laetitia,”167.
167 Cf. Ibid.
meeting for the first time. At every new stage, they can keep “forming” one another. Love makes each wait for the other with the patience of a craftsman, a patience which comes from God.”

### 2.2. Discernment as Choosing Better than Good

In *AL*, Pope Francis does not use it in the ordinary sense or ‘common sense’, or ‘sensible judgment’, but above all in the spiritual sense which is the ability to exercise one’s own Freedom to make decisions, particularly those relating to the identification of one’s means to reach the end. The challenge of discernment is to move through these passions, using them as a means of identifying not what is good enough but that which is better.

Experiencing an emotion is not, in itself, morally good or evil. The stirring of desire or repugnance is neither sinful nor blameworthy. What is morally good or evil is what we do on the basis of, or under the influence of, a given passion. But when passions are aroused or sought, and as a result we perform evil acts, the evil lies in the decision to fuel them and in the evil acts that result. Along the same lines, my being attracted to someone is not automatically good.

Discernment in the conjugal life is depending upon the situation in which they should make their decision to live. They should discern choice of lifestyle and ways of child education, and decisions on the way of life of sexuality and the exercise of responsible parenthood, which is “not” unlimited procreation or lack of awareness of the meaning of raising children, but rather the opportunity given to couples to use their inviolable freedom wisely and responsibly, bearing in mind the will of God for them.

Discernment is therefore not a system for finding justifications, the norm always that indicates good. Discernment is more demanding than the norm because it requires

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168 FRANCIS, *Amoris Laetitia*, 221.
the legalistic logic of the minimum necessary to the do maximum possible good, in awareness of its limits.\textsuperscript{171} It means searching the will of God in every moment of life. It also includes the certain difficult moments or the irregular situation in which the married couples or the faithful lives seek an opportunity to abide by the will of God. To seek and search sincerely the will of God lead us to the process of conversion. Every true process of discernment leads to a continuous conversion. This conversion can make us move from bad to good, but it can also lead us from good to the best. To be aware of themselves, in the sight of God, the better thing to do keeping in mind the love of God through his life and experiencing the presence of God in the action with understanding the sense of the situation.\textsuperscript{172} Choosing better than good is not impure or unjustified. As Pope Francis mentions, “without detracting from the evangelical ideal, there is a need to accompany with mercy and patience the eventual stages of personal growth as these progressively appear, making room for the Lord’s mercy, which spurs us on to do our best.”\textsuperscript{173}

2.3. AN AWARENESS OF THEIR SITUATION BEFORE GOD

The document speaks about the irregular situations, which are affecting the family and conjugal life. Pope mentions some factors like divorce and remarriage. In these situations, the members should be guided by the pastors helping them to aware of their situation. “Priests have the duty to accompany (the divorced and remarried) in helping them to understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church and the guidelines of the Bishop.”\textsuperscript{174} The Pope does not want to justify sin, nor is it the situation of sin, but instead wants to help the faithful to return to himself to realize about

\textsuperscript{173} FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 308.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid, 300.
the situation and the sin. It is the duty of every man to realize well which way of life
attracts his heart and then choose that way with all his strength.\footnote{175}

In \textit{Familiaris Consortio} Pope John Paul II offered a comprehensive policy, which
remains the basis for the evaluation of these situations. \textit{Familiaris Consortio} n. 84
mentions that pastors must keep the fact that.\footnote{176} There is in fact a difference between
those who have sincerely tried to save their first marriage and have been unjustly
abandoned, and those who through their own grave fault have destroyed a canonically
valid marriage.\footnote{177}

By means of the sacraments of marriage, married couples receive from Christ
the gift of Grace, which is to be preserved in their ways. They are called to be in a
community to lead the life of holiness. The person called to live in the married state
realize their vocation to love, which is expressed and also through the body. But every
union is outside this is a sin and against the will of God. So, they must aware of the
situation in which they are living is not the will of God.\footnote{178}

Pope Francis invites the married couples to make the examination of conscience
in front of God through moments of reflection and repentance.

The divorced and remarried should ask themselves: how did they act towards their
children when the conjugal union entered into crisis; whether or not they made attempts
at re-conciliation; what has become of the abandoned party; what consequences the new
relationship has on the rest of the family and the community of the faithful; and what
example is being set for young people who are preparing for marriage. A sincere
reflection can strengthen trust in the mercy of God, which is not denied anyone.\footnote{179}

\footnote{175} Cf. L. \textsc{Viscardi} \textsc{--} C. \textsc{Gentili}, “Amoris Laetitia. Una nuova era per la teologia del
\footnote{176} Cf. Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, \textit{Relatio Finalis} (24
October 2015), 85.
\footnote{177} Cf. \textit{Ibid.}
\footnote{178} Cf. \textsc{Pontifical Council for the Family}, \textit{The pastoral care of the divorced and the
\footnote{179} \textsc{Francis}, \textit{Amoris Laetitia}, 300.
The married couples are invited to make the examination of conscience in the moment of crisis. But the conscience should be related to God, to the teaching of the church, to the community and their relatives and loves ones. So, it should not lead to relativism. And that they can make their discernment to make good decision in accordance with the conscience.\textsuperscript{180}

\textit{AL} 305 mentions the importance of the personal desire to receive the Grace of God. In the objective condition of “irregularity”, the subject may not be fully culpable for the situation. So here the discernment is to know the real situation of the person and help them to live in the grace of God, with the help of the Sacraments.

Because of forms of conditioning and mitigating factors, it is possible that in an objective situation of sin which may not be subjectively culpable, or fully such a person can be living in God’s grace, can love and can also grow in the life of grace and charity, while receiving the Church’s help to this end. Discernment must help to find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits. By thinking that everything is black and white, we sometimes close off the way of grace and of growth, and discourage paths of sanctification which give glory to God. Let us remember that a small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order, but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties.\textsuperscript{181}

Through the Sacraments the faithful receive the Grace of God. Pastors, through the confession, are invited to merciful towards the people those who are really in need of the Grace. Pope reminds that “I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber, but rather an encounter with the Lord’s mercy”.\textsuperscript{182} I would also point

\textsuperscript{180} Cf. S. ZANARDO, “LA forza della vulnerabilità, riflessioni a margine di Amoris Laetitia,” 169.
\textsuperscript{181} FRANCIS, \textit{Amoris Laetitia}, 305.
\textsuperscript{182} FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation \textit{Evangelii Gaudium} (24 November 2013), 44 AAS 105 (2013), 1038.
out that the Eucharist “is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”\footnote{Ibid., 47 1039}

\textit{AL} demands that the confessor takes on more personal responsibility in assessing the good of the penitent and the people involved in his actions, with a merciful heart and with therapeutic intent. Its role is certainly much more challenging. But it must be said that it also becomes more meaningful, richer and more ministerial.\footnote{Cf. B. PETRÀ, \textit{Amoris Laetitia: accompagnare, discernere e integrare la fragilità}, 26.}

The sacrament of confession is an invitation to live the way of conversion. It is also an invitation, to all those who are living the complex situation in the family, to discern in accordance with the moral value of Gospel and the church.

In \textit{AL}, discernment is expressed as an ongoing process. or in another way we can say that it is a walk towards the way or to know the will of God. So, discernment orders the steps and dimensions of that path to identify where and how God is sending that person or community to conversion and life.\footnote{Cf. A. SPADARO – L.J. CAMELI, “La sfida del disernimento in Amoris Laetitia,” 15.} The married couples when they are in way of sin, they reflect the sin and their sinful way of living. And should lead them to the thirst for the Grace of God to continue their live with Him. So, it leads them to real conversion and repentance about their sinful stage of life. In the words of Pope Francis;

Conscience can do more than recognize that a given situation does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one’s limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal. (AL 303).

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3. METHODS FOR MORAL DISCERNMENT

In the family and conjugal life moral discernment is to know the will of God. According St. Paul in his letter to Colossians says that;

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. (Col 1:9-10)

We are all part of a community, so we have already been given some norms and values from our society. For every Christian, his decision always should depend upon the teaching of Jesus Christ through the Gospel. In the Gospel, he finds the way or the right way through which he should go. It is transmitted to him through the Holy Church. “Whatever the case, all these situations require a constructive response seeking to transform them into opportunities that can lead to the full reality of marriage and family in conformity with Gospel.”¹⁸⁶

Jesus, though rooted in things by the Father, felt the need to make discernment in order to better understand the Father’s will on him and his disciples to enter into the darkness of the mystery waiting for him to express his love in fullness which saves. He discerns before choosing the twelve apostles (Lk 6: 12-13), in the event of transgression, in a climate of prayer and in comparison, with the Word: law and prophets in addition to exercising discernment at various moments of his life invites disciples to know discernment. Discernment supposes a “see,” but it must be a vision that he can capable, that is, to go beyond immediate appearances and be able to orient himself in the complexity of things. Discerning is firing, it is penetrating with the look

¹⁸⁶ FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 294.
through the overhead. This means that discernment requires not only intellectual skills, but also the light of the Spirit.

3.1. IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL

The reflection of Pope Francis takes inspiration from the Holy Scriptures where he grasped messages, which speaks about the family. “The Bible is full of families, births, love stories and family crises. This is true from its very first page, with the appearance of Adam and Eve’s family with all its burden of violence but also its enduring strength (cf. Gen 4) to its very last page, where we behold the wedding feast of the Bride and the Lamb (Rev 21:2, 9).” “This will always the case as the spirit will guide us to towards the entire truth (cf. Jn16: 13), until he leads us fully into the mystery of Christ and enables us to see all things as he does.”

Spiritual discernment concerns, in particular, the path of faith and the relationship with God. It involves the commitment of seeking God’s will in one’s life and in the events of history, following the way of the Gospel. Therefore, discernment consists in understanding how evangelical truth embodies and is realized in my life, in my life; And involves the decision to move to action, to make concrete choices. Discernment therefore refers to well-formed conscience, to the freedom of man and to the concreteness of life.

Discernment is discovering, concretely and not in abstract, what God wants from my life, with all my abilities and difficulties. To discover the will of God with the help of the Gospel is always need a great attention, because our situation is not same as the situation in which the Gospel is written. Searching the value of the teaching of Christ in

\[187\] Ibid., 4.
the concrete situation of our life especially with our own personal limits, need a great effort. It is therefore necessary to understand what the Lord wants in that situation and also appreciate the small steps that a person can accomplish.189

Holy Scripture is also the history of the people those who have experienced the presence of God and lived the will of God. First chapter of the AL describe the families in the Holy Bible. By describing this the document indicate the way in which the family lived their life in accordance with the love and the will of God. The relation between the married couple “We hear an echo of the command found in the Book of Genesis: ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Gen 2:24)”’.190 The gift of God in the family by referring the Scripture; “Let us once more take up the song of the Psalmist. In the home where husband and wife are seated at table, children appear at their side ‘like olive shoots’ (Ps 128:3), that is, full of energy and vitality. If the parents are in some sense the foundations of the home, the children are like the ‘living stones’ of the family (cf. 1 Pet 2:5)”.191

The postmodern family and the conjugal life have lost the sense of its value and is importance therefore deeply hurt the society and especially the Church. This type of thinking and relations should enter into dialogue, so that one could return to a full life in Jesus Christ. But to do this, it is necessary to recognize the primacy of the person and the centrality of the conscience that is involved in the practice of the Church encouraging its maturation and accompanying towards an increasingly responsible

189 Cf. Ibid.
190 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 9.
191 Ibid, 14.
discernment with mercy and patience along the possible stages of growth towards the possible good. 192

In the light of the Word of God, he describes human love in absolutely concrete and convincing terms and presents to the spouses this Word as if it were a mirror in which to reintroduce the quality of their love and to discern to do the will of God and realize what all things which is happening in their life is related to the demand of Gospel. 193

In reference to the Holy Scripture Pope Francis specifies some useful criteria to discern the quality of married and family love. Discernment in the family always depend upon the love. The family is the place where the joy of love exists. No family is a perfect reality and packaged once and for all, but requires each component to gradually develop their ability to love. “No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love.” 194

In the conjugal life, the ability to love is a great criterion for discernment. The ability to love requires the effort to get out of one’s egoism. This exodus implies a real paschal itinerary: to die every day, to listen to the other, to be given to him (to her), to others, so that the couple or family community is born and raised. His is an exodus experience with the awareness that the from my “I” (by my pride, or my logic) that leads me to an authentic encounter with each other. 195

“We have to realize that all of us are a complex mixture of light and shadows. The other person is much more than the sum of the little things that annoy me. Love

194 Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 325.
does not have to be perfect for us to value.”

In the conjugal life the couple discern that this criterion of fragility and imperfection, gradual growth in mature and fully conscious love, to what extent does it interrupt their relationship with each other and the other members of the family.

Pope specifies the importance of forgiveness in the conjugal life. To discern to forgive has a great value in the conjugal life.

When we have been offended, or let down, forgiveness is possible and desirable, but no one can say that it is easy. The truth is that “family communion can only be preserved and perfected through a great spirit of sacrifice. It requires, in fact, a ready and generous openness of each and all to understanding, to forbearance, to pardon, to reconciliation. There is no family that does not know how selfishness, discord, tension and conflict violently attack and at times mortally wound its own communion: hence there arise the many and varied forms of division in family life.”

Such situations produce wounds, tears in the relationship, and cause anger, hatred, desire for revenge. Forgiveness is the only way and the only therapy capable of treating those wounds. But experience shows us that it is not easy to forgive.

Only if we have experienced the forgiveness of God, it is also possible for us to forgive. Pope Francis says, “If we accept that God’s love is unconditional, we must not buy nor pay, then we can love beyond everything, forgive others even when they have been unjust with us.”

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196 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 113.
197 Ibid, 106.
199 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 108.
3.2. TOGETHER WITH THE CHURCH

Certainly, there is an evolution of the pastoral but, at the same time, there is an evolution in the understanding of the Gospel. Evangelical principles remain intact. The gospel is not meant as a stone but as nourishing bread. At the same time, there is an evolution of doctrine. The church documents and its teaching always keep the faithful to realize the will of God in their life.

To discern well, we need to think and feel with the church. The couples when they are receiving Grace of God through the Sacrament of Marriage, they are invited to exercise and keep the Grace of God through their life. So, the teaching of the Church for them is the way through which they can exercise the Grace of the Sacrament. In this sense discerning does not mean justifying every conceivable desire in the absence of reasons. It is rather a question of reasons that respond to the needs of truth and charity.²⁰⁰

The discipline of the Church must therefore be proposed and implemented as an indispensable criterion for discernment, without however absorbing it. From the recognition of the weight of concrete conditioning, we can add that people’s consciousness needs to be better involved in the practice of the Church in some situations. “Conversation with the priest, in the internal forum, contributes to the formation of a correct judgment on what hinders the possibility of a fuller participation in the life of the Church and on what steps can foster it and make it grow.”²⁰¹ Pope specifies the importance of discernment with the Church by expressing the attitude of the faithful to receive the Grace of God. “For this discernment to happen, the following conditions must necessarily be present: humility, discretion and love for the Church and

²⁰⁰ Cf. J. GRANADOS – S. KAMPOWSKIE, Amoris Laetitia, Accompagnare, discernere, integrare, 123.
²⁰¹ FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 300.
her teaching, in a sincere search for God’s will and a desire to make a more perfect response to it.”

“Let the layman not imagine that his pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom and giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church.”

3.3. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE: FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

The examination of conscience is always precious because it is made by an individual a person came to a decision by analysing the conscience and responding the questions which one obligated to answer. The judgement which made by the examination of conscience should be accordance with the faithful community and specially to the Gospel and the church teachings. This help the individual to make their decision not in an isolated way but with the spirit of the community.

Conscience is well defined in Gaudium et Spes 16:

In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbour.

Examination of conscience is really time and exercise, specially to analyse personal reactions to the manifold will of the lord. Examination of conscience is

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202 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 300.
203 VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Gaudium et spes, 43.
205 VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Gaudium et spes, 16.
discernment process in which each one is tested in the light of the Spirit his actions to find out the defects and the sin. It also helps the people to realize if they behaved as wise men, and related to the Word of God, or not.\textsuperscript{206}

Examination of consciousness in general purifies, or hears, knows and discriminates the motions of spirits. It is also to be kept in mind when you look for conscience: see if you have been faithful to the stresses of the Spirit and, at the same time, to specify what the same Spirit, through motions, has taught and also asked or indicated.\textsuperscript{207} The exhortation speaks about personal discernment (the faithful with his conscience) in relation to the formation of the judgment of conscience in the concrete situation. The Document \textit{AL} indicates and invites the faithful to examine the conscience in order realize whether they are living out the demands of the Gospel, through the teaching of the Church or not.\textsuperscript{208}

With the examination of conscience, the couple those who live in difficult situation realize their sin. And it leads the faithful to receive the Grace of God through the Sacraments. \textit{AL} specifies that good subjective consciousness is not only sufficient reason to admit to the sacraments. Good subjective consciousness is a necessary but not sufficient condition. Certainly, those who approach the sacraments without good subjective conscience commit a sacrilege and eat and drink their own condemnation. In order to avoid the danger of the sacrilege. But in fact, this is not enough the Church invites the faithful to begin the path of a conversion. It means that good subjective consciousness begins to be restless, that the person recognizes that he has sinned and recognizes (beginning to recognize) the law he has transgressed.\textsuperscript{209}

\textsuperscript{207} Cf. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{208} Cf. B. PETRÀ, \textit{Amoris Laetitia: accompagnare, discernere e integrare la fragilità}, 30.
The examination of conscience is also a judgment of an action. Conscience of an individual examine whether the individual’s course of action is aligned with the general moral norms. The way AL specify the guilty conscience when it recognizes a disconnection between one’s action and the proper moral order. Conscience can do more to judge one’s own action. AL affirm that “it (conscience) can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to a God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one’s limits, while not yet fully the objective deal.”

4. MORAL DISCERNMENT FACING THE COMPLEX FAMILY SITUATIONS

The complex situations are the situations which make a division in the family life. In the document AL, Pope Francis specifies some situations which are usually seen in the family life; like divorced, remarried couples, those who are living in conjugal life outside the grace of the sacraments etc. The complex family situations are to be evaluated for seeking the will of God to discern to do good. The family or the couple couples, those who are in a complex situation but with the sincere heart to be with the Church, are invited to make a process of discernment. Pope says that;

In considering a pastoral approach towards people who have contracted a civil marriage, who are divorced and remarried, or simply living together, the Church has the responsibility of helping them understand the divine pedagogy of grace in their lives and offering them assistance so they can reach the fullness of God’s plan for them, something which is always possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.

211 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 303
212 Ibid., 297.
The exhortation not only speaks of the pastoral discernment, it also speaks of the personal discernment of the faithful especially those who are living in a complex situation, which are in fact needed for the Church today. AL, n.298 specifies these two modes of discernment. In fact, when Pope observes the diversity of the situations of divorced and remarried, as mentioned in the FC, 84, Pope underlines the need not to let go for a too rigid statement and leave room for an adequate personal and pastoral discernment. These two modes of discernment, pastoral and personal, are also mentioned at the beginning of n. 300, where explicitly mentions the way of discernment and a new encouragement to a responsible personal and pastoral discernment in the problematic situations of the conjugal life and in the family.213

4.1. TO SEEK THE WILL OF GOD: THE POSSIBLE GOOD

The main moral task is to discern the demands of God in the midst of one’s complex web of relationships and responsibilities. Moral theology must leave room for the Lord, which means accepting uncertainty at times. “if a person says that he met God with total certainly and is not touched by a margin of uncertainty, then this is not good[...] if one has the answer to all the questions – that is the proof that God is not with him.”214 All the faithful especially the members in the family and the couples, those who facing different kind of problems in the conjugal life, are invited to attend to the voice of God echoing in their depth on all moral matters. “Discernment must help to find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits.”215

People those who are living in a conflict situation, and have the great desire to receive the Eucharist is primarily based on the fact that they love the Lord. They

213 Cf. B. Petrà, Amoris Laetitia:accompagnare, discernere e integrare la fragilità, 10.
215 FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 305.
know that the Eucharist means intimate union with the Lord, this intimate union with Lord, what they truly desire. This is obviously the way through which they realize the will of to do the possible good. With the Catechism of the Church and Church documents especially the make the faithful to realize the will of God. Through the celebration of Sacraments, the faithful experience the intimate union with the God. Especially the celebration of the Eucharist is an ecclesial act that does not only perform union between individual and Jesus, and also can come to understand that their objective situation, regardless of their state of grace, which contradicts the mystery of Christ’s fidelity to his bride, the Church.216

Pope speaks about to make of theological reflection which helps the people to act with the love of God or to discern the will of God. “What we need is a more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family, and in this way to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them. The desire to unite with Christ can thus mature in a desire to change his lifestyle.”217

As Pope states in AL, citing Aquinas’s distinction between primary and secondary precepts of the natural law, “The (moral) principle will be found to fail, according as we descend further into detail.”218

It is true that general rules set forth a good which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in their formulation, they cannot provide absolutely for all particular situations. At the same time, it must be said that, precisely for that reason, what is part of a practical discernment in particular circumstances cannot be elevated to the level of a rule. That

217FRANCIS, Amoris Laetitia, 34.
218 Ibid., 304.
would not only lead to an intolerable casuistry, but would endanger the very values which must be preserved with special care.\textsuperscript{219}

“Faith in the guidance of the Holy Spirit can help to ameliorate fears of errors, especially when conscience is understood as the voice of God—s very self, but this still does not eliminate the possibility of error because misinterpretation and self-deception are still possible.”\textsuperscript{220} The grace of God, of course, remains always active and needs to be relied on even in difficult, sinful situations. Pope specifies the need for conversion through responding to the will of God. The light of the Christ illumines the heart of the faithful to discern the will of God. Following the divine teaching, “the Church turns with love to those who participate in her life in an imperfect manner: she seeks the grace of conversion for them; she encourages them to do good, to take loving care of each other and to serve the community in which they live and work.”\textsuperscript{221}

Conscience is that interior space where I hear what is true, what is good, what is of God; it is that interior place of my relationship with God. And there God speaks to my heart and helps me to discern and to understand the road that I need to follow. Once I have made a decision, God helps me to go forward and to remain faithful to it.\textsuperscript{222}

The pope generously draws on both Scripture and the tradition to identify the goal of discernment. It is to know the will of God in the particular circumstances of my life, so that I may embrace it and live it as best as I can. The assumption—and this is very important for the understanding of discernment—is that there is not only a “generic” or universal will of God, but there is also a particular and specific way that God’s will is imprinted in my life with my personality, with my circumstances and with my unique vocation.\textsuperscript{223}

Our fundamental belief is that the call of God and the will of God are inscribed in the narrative of our lives. God’s truth and our life direction is implanted in our very

\textsuperscript{219} Ib\textit{id}.
\textsuperscript{220} C.M. KELLY, “The role of moral theologian in the Church: A proposal in the light of Amoris Laetitia,” 924.
\textsuperscript{221} FRANCIS, \textit{Amoris Laetitia}, 78.
\textsuperscript{223} Ib\textit{id}.
existence. But, it is our duty to search and find it. It is possible only with a kind attention to our conscience, through which God’s truth and direction would emerge with sufficient clarity for us to embrace it and live it.\textsuperscript{224}

\textit{4.2. Discernment: Love and Mercy Realities}

Discernment is always depending upon love. With the exhortation, Pope specify the importance of personal discernment. Jesus Christ is our most important criterion for decision making or discernment. Only with Him we can make a good decision; to do good and to do His will. Because He is love and mercy. In the document \textit{AL}, Pope Francis suggests, love and mercy ought to be the criterions for making a good decision in the family, especially in the conjugal life which in moving in a complex situation.

To opt for marriage in this way expresses a genuine and firm decision to join paths, come what may. Given its seriousness, this public commitment of love cannot be the fruit of a hasty decision, but neither can it be postponed indefinitely. Committing oneself exclusively and definitively to another person always involves a risk and a bold gamble. Unwillingness to make such a commitment is selfish, calculating and petty. It fails to recognize the rights of another person and to present him or her to society as someone worthy of unconditional love.\textsuperscript{225}

The Pope dedicates a whole chapter (\textit{AL} 89-164), to explain the Love in Marriage. This chapter describes at least seven essential characteristics of authentic love. The first characteristic of love opens our eyes and enable us to see human being above all the things. In other words, we can say that the let us see the truth and recognize the real value of those whom we love. The second characteristic of love exists in the freedom and it always respects the freedom. Pope Francis quotes St. Aquinas teaching about love, which depends on its being freely given. The third characteristic of love that which always gives life, is the mutual love that results in the new life, of

\textsuperscript{224} Cf. \textit{Ibid.}, 13.
\textsuperscript{225} FRANCIS, \textit{Amoris Laetitia}, 132.
children being born, the Pope specify the need for the growth in love between the parents themselves.\textsuperscript{226} He says;

Marital love is not defended primarily by presenting indissolubility as a duty, or by repeating doctrine, but by helping it to grow ever stronger under the impulse of grace. A love that fails to grow is at risk. Growth can only occur if we respond to God’s grace through constant acts of love, acts of kindness that become ever more frequent, intense, generous, tender and cheerful. Husbands and wives become conscious of their unity and experience it more deeply from day to day. The gift of God’s love poured out upon the spouses is also a summons to constant growth in grace.\textsuperscript{227}

The fourth characteristics of love, that prompt the couples to reveal their true selves. Through this they come to know each other. The fifth characteristic is the affective union to highlight the union involved in the conjugal love. This union is expressed in image of Holy Trinity because in Holy Trinity we can see the love in its full sense. In this love, they live with each other and for each other, but never at the expense of each other. The sixth characteristic of love is lifelong sharing. This love will not end and it is not a temporary love. The couples should acknowledge that the love is long-term pledge and a life time commitment, otherwise it has no sense. Finally, the seventh characteristic is love which remains unintelligible. Pope explains this love with the example of the parable of lost son.\textsuperscript{228}

Moral discernment is always depending upon the love because those who live in love always like to be in love with others. And they will be happy and rejoice by seeing others well-being.\textsuperscript{229}

\textsuperscript{227} FRANCIS, \textit{Amoris Laetitia}, 134.
\textsuperscript{228} Cf. G. O’Collins, “The Joy of love (Amoris Laetitia)”, 916.
\textsuperscript{229} Cf. \textit{Ibid}.  

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4.3. *DISCERN TO ACCOMPANY AND INTEGRATE*

Valorising the various situations is not merely a matter of courtesy or good heart, rather an expression of the logic of the mercy and the integration. “The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone forever; it is to pour out the balm of God’s mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart.”\(^{230}\) The logic of Christ and the Church is far different from the other logic, especially the logic of the world, that is, the logic of marginalization. The Pope insists on the need for the discernment of the shepherd to integrate in the Christian community all those who are away from the Church and the Christ, without any kind of marginalization and avoiding any chance of scandal.\(^{231}\)

For this reason, discernment needs to be very attentive and know how to distinguish the various situations without consider them with simplicity and with generalized solutions. The pastors should distinguish the situation and make the discernment adapted to the situation.\(^{232}\) Pope invites all the Pastors to listen the faithful with great attention saying, “I also encourage the Church’s pastors to listen to them with sensitivity and serenity, with a sincere desire to understand their plight and their point of view, in order to help them live better lives and to recognize their proper place in the Church.”\(^{233}\) This does not mean that shepherds should forget or neglect pastoral norms of general morals. “It is true that general rules set forth a good which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in their formulation, they cannot provide absolutely for all particular situations.”\(^{234}\) The general rules do not have their power in itself, but it derivates from the values (goods) they protect and promote.\(^{235}\)

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\(^{230}\) FRANCIS, *Amoris Laetitia*, 296.


\(^{232}\) Cf. *Ibid*.

\(^{233}\) FRANCIS S., *Amoris Laetitia*, 312.


People those who are living in great fragility. Pastors are invited to discern to be closer to the one who needs more help, especially, like the wounded man in the parable, he cannot walk alone, and the attitude of Good Samaritan, to carry him on his shoulders. Keeping this attitude of Good Samaritan Pope Francis inviting the Church accompany these people to discern the will of God. Each of these cases has to be treated in a specific way, and even in the intricate situations the accompaniment by other couples and the community is also decisively important.  

People those who really want to walk with the church, should keep their mind to realize the will of God, because in our weakness God speaks in a special way through our wounds, failures, and impotence. The document makes an important attention to the personal aspect of each Christian to become merciful. It invites everyone to be a good Samaritan, and “sheds how the inner quality of the person makes the difference, one can respond by raising the wall of prescriptions or may be free even by the rules, not by license or tolerance, because the rules are so intimate that become the affective substance of acting. Then nothing can make them vacillate, not even their apparent transgression.”

Pastors in the church are not only called to speak magisterially of the morality of mercy; They are also called to be merciful, or to show the face of the mercy of the father. The faithful should always experience the mercy of their father in the mediation of their work. Mercy does not exclude justice and truth, but above all we must say that mercy is the fullness of justice and the most luminous manifestation of God’s truth. All the faithful are also called to the merciful and with merciful heart, to live and manifest the mercy of God to others. They are called to be compassionate towards their fellow

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237 Cf. S. ZANARDO, “LA forza della vulnerabilità, riflessioni a margine di Amoris Laetitia,” 175.
beings and to impart the Grace of God. Faithful must know that Holy Gospel and the Church documents indicate the way to accept the people those who are leading the family life in an irregular way, in order to be compassionate towards them and thereby not judging them in their concrete life situations.  

Moral decision making is always tending to do the Good, that means realize moral value which is to be done in every moment of life, which is human (good for the human). Because this is the will of God. man should love each other and his actions should come from this love. so, he can do good in all the time. God wants from each one of us to make the decision to do Good in accordance with our conscience. Person in his conscience should realize which is the human value (moral value) one should do while analysing the subjectivity (and also objectivity of the subject) and objectivity. But decision making should be depending upon the norms of the Christian community and the moral value of the Gospel.

In AL, the members in the family are invited to make their moral discernment in their complex situation their love. Love and the mercy is a great criterion through which they can discern to do Good for the members in the family. To give space to the conscience to listen the voice of God helps us to decide the human value in the complex situation where the human values are in conflict. The pastoral discernment is always important in these family situations, pastors helps them to realize the need of the moral discernment to walk in the light of Gospel. and also walk with the Church,

Moral discernment always tends us to decide good, which is human. It is up to us to realize that good with the accurate evaluation of the objectivity and subjectivity.

An individual cannot make or form his conscience without the relationship between the fellow human being. Through our relationship between others help us to form our conscience and make us capable of realizing what is good for the man in every moment of life.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

Discernment as a word, means, to distinguish or to perceive clearly. And it has also another meaning like distinguish, divide etc. Moral discernment is not a simple decision making process. Moral discernment is discernment to do good, that means to do good, which is good for human. And do the good always and in every moment of the life. It is also very important to realise the good as it is, and to realize the human value, which is to be done in a certain and concrete life situation.

It is possible only through the adequate formation of the conscience. The formation of the personal conscience is an ongoing process. Through our moral experience and given moral norms and laws we make moral decision in our life. It is also important that decision making is not mere application of norms, but to realize the value of the norms in a certain situation and act according to that moral value. An individual conscience is always influenced by the ethos of the community in which he lives.

Moral discernment is a process through which the person evaluates subjectivity and objectivity of the action. Person as a subject evaluate the object, through his moral experience and with the help of norms, and analyses the moral value to be done in certain situation, which is the major good possible in that moment to do,
and act according to that conviction. In this objective moral evaluation person realize himself and realize in his conscience the major human value is to be done in the concrete situation.

For a Christian moral discernment is based on the moral value of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. The conscience of every Christian, is illuminated by the life and the teaching of the Master Jesus Christ. Because Christian life is centered on Him. Christian faithful not merely copying the Master, but interpreting the message of Master with the help of the Church. The Holy Gospel and the Church teaching illuminates the conscience of Christian to do the will of God. as we know the will of God is always the salvation of mankind, or in other words the good of the people. So, the will of God is to do good (good for human, or human value). For Christ, human value is always important. He was doing everything for the good of His people.

This aspect of doing the will of God (moral value or human value) in every moment of life is clearly explained in the document AL. Through the document, Church invites each and every faithful to discern the good (moral value) in every moment of their life. AL specify the importance of moral discernment in the conjugal life and the family. In the complex family situation were the moral values are in conflict, it is needed the accurate evaluation of the situation and moral values. Here the person should realize which moral value is related to the good of the man in that situation and should do it. Pastoral discernment is also depending upon the salvation of the people. So, the Pastors are invited to decide what would be the major moral value is to be decided in the certain complex situations in the family.

AL indicates a discernment which leads to a conversion. People those who are living in the complex situations in the family should realize themselves and their situation. They should have the desire to receive the grace of God to get out from their
complex situation. The pastors are invited to accept these people, those who reach the Church with a broken heart. Pastors help them to do moral discernment and to be in the Grace of God, through the Sacraments. And accompany them to discern and make them capable of discern well according to the teaching of the Church and moral value of the Gospel.
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**DICTIONARIES**


INTERNET

