

As Teenagers—What are the Moral Obligations That We Owe Each Other?
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This is a question which is seldom “asked” as a question, must “live by.” It is when we “live” with each other in this sense, whether in school, at the dance, at home, or even on the basketball court, that we must consider certain questions.

Our “life” with each other naturally involves a “doing,” a “saying,” and a “being.” Whenever we communicate, these things are involved. I think we know if we are mature teenagers, when we are *doing* the proper thing; when we are *saying* it the right way; and finally when we are *being* fair. We are constantly being tested and forced to consider as Christians, just what is that right way; and if we do not realize this, there is no point in going any further.

But we *do* know and therefore we can ask these questions. The first is to ask: “How do we view each other?” Is it by the way the person dresses? By the way he looks? Or walks and talks? Maybe by the way he eats in the cafeteria? Are these the things that we use to “judge” each other? To begin with, are we even in a position to “judge?” We must remember that Jesus Christ told us *not* to judge unless we are ready to be judged also. This may seem old fashioned, and you’ve all heard that “Golden Rule” many times. But think for one moment: are you *yourself* ready to be judged by that very one you are no judging? If only we could put ourselves in the other’s shoes!

There is a true story about a young teenager in a near-by New Jersey city who was constantly being “teased” and laughed at by his classmates. The reason for this mockery was one of those silly reasons that I have just mentioned. He was like the scapegoat of the class. They judged him as one who was less than they were. Do you know that this young man committed suicide! Certainly he was wrong! Certainly it was silly! But from this example, which is perhaps an extreme one, we can see the results and the importance of the way which we view each other.

But we must ask another question: “How consistent are we with each other?” Are we “sometimes” friends? You know the type: the one who is your friend when he needs your help in the exam or when he needs a small loan. Are we that “friend” or are we really the one who is there whether or not I “need” him for something?

But the Church tells that we always “need” each other! That does not mean, however, in this sense of USING each other. It means something completely different and that brings us to the final question. “Why?” Why should we respect each other? Why should we not “use” each other? Why do we *need* each other? Just because he or she *is* a person, because God is in each person, and He never said that He was “more” in you than any other! In this sense, when we treat each other with such respect, we are in fact respecting God Himself.

One more thing to remember: God is *in* all of us, but that does not mean that any of us *is* God!