

A Catechism of Character (Continued)
(Father Hull, S.J. in "Man's Great Concern.")

What is an occasion of sin?

An occasion of sin is anything which makes sin easy and likely if we do not keep out of its way. A bad companion is all the more likely to prove an occasion of sin, the more fond we are of him.

"How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill deeds done." -- Shakespeare.

Besides bad company, are there other occasions of sin put in our way by other people?

Yes. Newspapers, books, moving pictures, plays, pictures and statues can all become occasions of sin, if they contain anything which will injure religion or morals, or excite our passions or tempt us to sin.

How can other people drive us to sin?

An employer can make use of his power to induce an employee to sin, because the employee is afraid to refuse.

~~Any strong character can influence a weaker character, so that is very hard to resist.~~

Bad people can mock or make fun of us because we want to be good. They think it is a manly thing to sin, and treat us as cowards and fools because we hold back from sin.

How can we stand up against this?

By remembering that virtue is strength and not weakness; that nothing is so manly as to stick to duty in spite of everything. In this way we can show our strength by not giving way to human respect.

Human Respect.

What is Human respect?

Human respect means being afraid of other people's opinions, and not daring to do what we know is right, for fear of what they might say or think of us.

Note: Due consideration for other people's wishes and opinions is a virtue of charity and humility. But if we extend this consideration to their wishes and opinions which are bad and vicious, such consideration becomes a vice -- the vice of human respect.

How Can I stand up against human respect?

By remembering that I am responsible for my actions to God, and not to other people; that if I go wrong I shall suffer for it, and not they; that I am not going to spoil myself merely because other people want me to; that I am not going to be a slave to their views and wishes. Make it a matter of pride and self-respect to show a stiff back, and to act without fear and without reproach."

"If we fear men much," says St. Ignatius, "We shall never do anything great for God; everything done for God stirs up persecution."

The test is whether or not we are willing to defy men, and if need be to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of religious principles in our everyday life.