



Recognition of freedom of conscience and religious freedom is one of the highest goods and most serious duties of every people who wish to ensure the good of the person and society. It is not my intention to write a legal article, but it may not be worth remembering a judgment of the Constitutional Court of April 1985, with the indication that the right to conscientious objection exists and may be exercised regardless of whether it has been regulated or not, because it is part of the content of the fundamental right to ideological and religious freedom of article 16.1 of our Constitution.

But I will go another way, using principles of the church's social doctrine that can serve all, since are related to the basic rights of the person. It is unique and unrepeatable and must be understood, not only with respect but with the commitment of all, especially political and social institutions, to promote their integral development. Because of this uniqueness and dignity of the human being, the social order must be subordinated to the good of the person and not the contrary, for it is the foundation and the end of political coexistence. In this context, and after the disaster of the second world war, which so severely violated these rights, because of collectivism and genocide, the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man, proclaimed by the UN in 1948, is framed. These rights lie in the dignity of human nature. They have to come into this world, whether or not they are recognized by the laws of the peoples. Fortunately, the Spanish Constitution states that rights and freedoms will be interpreted following the aforementioned declaration.

The personal conscience is the most intimate place of man, directly related to his freedom because, "God, in creating us, has run the risk and adventure of our freedom," wrote the founder of Opus Dei. He wanted a story that is a true story, made of authentic decisions, and not a fiction or a game. Each man has to make the experience of his autonomy, with what that implies of chance, of trial and, sometimes, of uncertainty. A non-believer will have no difficulty in admitting that freedom. In the use of it, the conscience is called to recognize practically and concretely the truth about good and evil, at the same time that it assumes its

consequences. Hence the obligation to seek the truth to get right in the judgments of the conscience and to avoid that this is mere subjectivity. But no one can impersonate another in this judgment; no one can form the conscience of another if he, or his parents if it is a minor, do not decide freely. In particular, the political authority must guarantee the orderly life of the community, but without supplanting the activity of individuals or groups and without meddling at all in consciences.

The right to religious freedom such as those of ideological freedom of expression is inalienable. Specifically, the first of these makes the person immune from coercion in religious matters by the authority. Therefore, the citizen is not obliged in conscience to follow the requirements of the civil authority when they are contrary to their beliefs or thought. Moreover, as John Paul II stated, anyone who resorts to conscientious objection must be safe not only from criminal sanctions but also from any legal, disciplinary, economic or personal harm. Therefore, there is no point in asking, for example, that a gynecologist who does not perform abortion should not work in a public hospital. That would be professional discrimination because of the way he thinks. A conscientious objection could indeed be legislated. As the specialists say, it would be easier to do it in favor of conscience in abstentionist positions, that is, those that involve doing nothing. However, active behaviors, which offer a high level of danger, must surely be regulated, so that their conduct is not destructive to society.