

**Sisters of Mercy of the Americas**  
***SOGI Education: “Catholic Church Teaching, Conscience and Sensus Fidelum”***  
***Session Two: “Catholic Moral Teaching: Centrality of Conscience”***  
***Speaker/Facilitator: Dr Linda Hogan***  
***Saturday, November 13, 2021, 12 PM to 2 PM ET***

**Pre-readings:**

Carol Bayley “From Catholic Healthcare West to Dignity Health: Conflicts of Conscience in American Catholic Health Care” in De Cosse, D., & Heyer, K., (eds.) *Conscience and Catholicism, Rights, Responsibilities and Institutional Responses*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 2015  
*Fidelity and Freedom: The Issue of Dissent*. Summary of a talk given by Ladislav Orsay, SJ

**Reflection Questions:**

Carol Bayley’s article analyses the conflicts of conscience that arose in two particular cases in healthcare settings in the US. These cases may be familiar to many of the participants in this seminar. The cases allow for a focused discussion of the claims of conscience, the relationship with magisterial church teaching and the conflicts that occasionally ensue.

As you read this article and reflect on the cases, please consider these questions:

1. Bayley notes Glaser’s description of conscience ... ‘conscience is an insight into love and a call issued by the ultimate value and promise of love.’ (p. 140) The work of conscience is to discern what is required by the ultimate value and promise of love. In your experience, how does this discernment come about, what are the most important influences and how do these different influences relate to each other?
2. Bayley goes on to ask “Is conscience .. a listening in faith to the law in one’s heart written by God? Or must a Catholic, in order to be a Catholic, submit to a hierarchical authority outside of the self? Does conscience manifest primarily in obedience or in love?” What is your view of the dichotomy that is sometimes evident between the demands of justice and love, and obedience to hierarchical authority?
3. The demands of justice, as understood by many Catholics around the world, often point towards values and principles that conflict with Church teaching. What, in your view, is the ethical approach to these conflicts, and to dissent from church teaching?