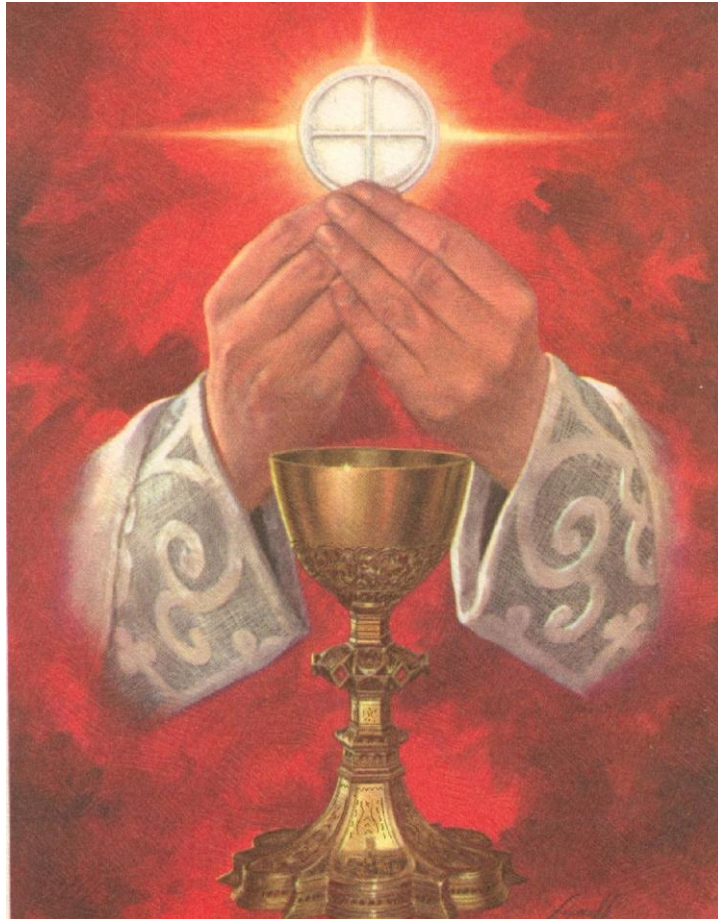


# DEALING WITH MATTERS OF THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS

## *MODERN DAY PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS*



*Holy Communion: the ultimate solution*

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# Introduction

## Foundation of Church Teaching on Sexual purpose

The Catholic Church's viewpoint on pornography is derived, not only from its viewpoint on sexuality, but also from its understanding of the relation of human beings to God and other human beings, and on the use of the human intellect and will.

The purpose of anything is understood from information given by its designer/maker or derivable from an analysis of the nature and capabilities of the thing itself. God is the designer/maker of human nature, including our intellect, our will, our human body and our sexuality.

For the maker of any product, the product itself is more important than a specific feature of the product and also more important than the motivation given to use the feature.

The product of which we speak is the human person, whose purpose is eternal happiness with God, the Creator, a happiness which involves primarily the human intellect and will. The human body decays after death while the soul continues to exist. Although the body will later be reconstituted and joined with the soul, the happiness of heaven is primarily that of the soul, where the intellect and will reside. People achieve their purpose in life by directing all their actions in the way indicated by their Creator, either through nature or by the Creator's revelation, such as in the Ten Commandments, and by using all their faculties for the purpose of each of those faculties.

Human sexuality is a feature of human nature that enables the procreation and subsequent development to maturity of other human beings, who have the same purpose (eternal happiness with God) as the parents. God could have given some other means of generating additional members of the human race, but He chose to give us this means of doing it.

The fact that the production of new members of the human race is the primary purpose of human sexuality can be seen from the fact that God creates human beings in two types, male and female, whose physical and psychological makeup complement each other in the specific way that their mutual sexual activity brings about the procreation of another human being.

## Marriage Needed for Child Development

For the newly-generated human person, a lengthy period of supervised development is needed, so they may grow to physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral and spiritual maturity, and so be equipped to achieve their own purpose of eternal happiness with God.

The lengthy period of supervised development of the children is best achieved by the on-going joint efforts of the man and woman who brought them into physical existence.

These efforts include providing for the children's physical needs and giving suitable intellectual stimulation plus emotional, social, moral and spiritual training and example.

This on-going joint effort requires that the parents stay together in a loving relationship. Lifelong commitment in marriage between one man and one woman is the principal way of insuring this on-going loving relationship. Only death should terminate it.

The mutual attraction that brings the couple together in the first place, including the physical pleasure of the marriage act, is a part of sexuality that is intended by God as the built-in motivation to hold them together while they bring their children to full maturity.

Human sexuality is to be used only in ways that either contribute to its purpose, that of procreation within marriage and fostering the love of the couple to assist them in raising the children thus created, or at least do not frustrate that purpose.

## **Legitimate Use Flows from God's Role**

God places the generation of a new human being capable of living with Him eternally in heaven at a much higher priority than any short-lived physical pleasure experienced by persons who use their sexual faculties without allowing for God and His purpose for sex.

God is personally involved in the creation of each new human soul, which gives life to the individual person that results from the marriage act. To take pleasure in sex without allowing God to exercise

His part in the process, that is, to use the sexual faculty in a way that knowingly frustrates its procreative purpose, is a direct insult to God.

Catholic teaching, therefore, has always been that the use of sex is legitimate only:

–between one man and one woman

–validly, legitimately and exclusively married to each other for life

–and under circumstances in which no positive steps are taken to prevent conception. Using sex for mere recreation violates this principle. This rules out a number of alternative uses of sex, some natural in the sense of being able to result in reproduction (adultery, fornication) though not providing for properly raising any children that result, and others unnatural in the sense of not being capable of reproduction (sodomy, masturbation, bestiality, and contraception).

Even a person's internal thoughts and desires regarding sexuality must conform to its legitimate external use.

"... [E]veryone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt 5:28)

Restricting one's sexual activity to the allowable uses requires that the person develop and exercise a high degree of self-control before marriage that carries forward into marriage.

## **PORNOGRAPHY IS *NOT* HARMLESS RECREATION**

At first glance it would seem that pornography involves only the person engaging in it. But does it harm that person in any way? And does it affect other persons indirectly?

### **How Pornography Does Harm**

Pornography incorrectly portrays sex as a legitimate means of recreation without reference to its purpose in procreation and in uniting the couple. It has a strong tendency to entice people to regard sex in a manner totally inconsistent with the purpose God intended.

Since it would entice the person to break down one's necessary self-control it is destructive of the individual's living in a way that will bring him or her to their very purpose in life.

Even for people who deny the existence of God and the spiritual soul of human beings – who deny the purpose of human life and of sexuality as we have described them, who reject the moral law and contend that everyone is free to act in any way they please – even for them pornography is destructive of the individual, family and society.

Pornography motivates people to engage in premarital and extra-marital sex, often with multiple partners, giving rise to sexually transmitted diseases, mothers without responsible husbands, and children without fathers to provide the example of a caring male and one who

will help them avoid growing up in poverty, leading to delinquency and crime. It has also given rise to the kidnapping of children for use in pornographic movies.

### **Physiology Affects Psychology**

Researchers have discovered that the viewing of sexually stimulating images causes the chemical epinephrine to find its way to the brain, locking in vivid memories that cannot be erased, thereby bringing about an addictive effect. The imagination then works together with the sense memory to create additional images.

Pornography also leads the individual to seek increasingly stronger stimuli, compounding the problem. He fantasizes about the images, seeks ways to act them out, then moves into enticing and later forcing partners to join with him, often leading to date rape.

Even in families where the pornography-addicted husband has not sought partners other than his own wife, he frequently tries to get the wife to act out the pornographic scenes, which makes her feel like a prostitute, and leading her to realize that he's more interested in the images than in her, undoing his fidelity to her and to their marriage.

Paradoxically, it has been discovered that the lack of feeling in the porno addict for his wife leads to impotence in his relations with her, which intensifies the unhappiness of spouses.

### **Serious Crimes**

The violence he practices with sexuality breaks down the inhibitions against non-sexual forms of violence. Sex and anger both require restraint. But pornography causes the viewer to consider the other person, not as a subject to love, but as an object for pleasure. And with that person seen as an object, there is a breakdown of inhibitions so that any incident involving anger could result in a serious attack.

Pornography has a high correlation with violent crime, including rape, torture and murder.

Defenders of pornography try to argue that a true causal effect has never been scientifically established, and even try to say that pornography helps people satisfy their impulses without acting them out (the opposite is actually the case) but anecdotal evidence plus police and prison statistics show that, regardless of other factors (such as childhood trauma and alcohol) that come into play, pornography is part of the background of an extremely high proportion of violent criminals.

Many times they were indulging in pornography just before the crime. (See 2004 article by Robert Peters in [mediawatch.org.uk/The Link Between Pornography and Violent Sex Crimes](http://mediawatch.org.uk/The_Link_Between_Pornography_and_Violent_Sex_Crimes), pages 9, 12, 21)

Pornography is also the direct cause of unintended suicides among youths. (See [ewtn.com/library/PROLENC/ENCYC134.HTM](http://ewtn.com/library/PROLENC/ENCYC134.HTM), page 2)

Pornography is therefore harmful to the individual who indulges in it, to his current and future sexual partners, to the next generation, and to society at large. It cannot be claimed that pornography is simply a harmless pastime, a victimless offense, or a phase in a person's development that will go away with time.

All these harmful effects flow from the failure to use human sexuality in the manner related to its true purpose, described above, that the Creator has pointed out.

## **Entitled to Freedom of Speech?**

Is pornography nevertheless entitled to protection as a legitimate form of free speech? Although the producers of pornographic material contend that it falls under the protection given by the First Amendment to freedom of speech, it actually does not constitute speech at all. It tries to circumvent speech's normal appeal to the intellect and direct its appeal instead to human passions in order to exploit human weakness. The producers and distributors of pornography actually thrive on the addiction it promotes.

Without commenting on details of the actual civil law, we may confidently state that it is the role of law to codify what's necessary for the good of people in society.

Pornography is seriously harmful, having an effect on a par with substance abuse, and its production and distribution should be illegal. Furthermore, laws against pornography that are actually on the books should be properly enforced.

If the traditions and customs of the United States make total abolition impossible, then pornography should be relegated to a status in which it can be obtained only by persons who deliberately seek it out, and not flaunted through the Internet, television, movies, magazines, outdoor advertising, and other sources of entertainment.

## **Connection with Human Happiness**

Human happiness will ultimately be found in Heaven, living with our all-loving God for all eternity. For the vast majority of people, its closest approximation in this life is within a loving family where each member finds his or her purpose in loving God and one another and in carrying out God's will.

But there are obstacles to this happiness that must be removed. Self-gratification must never be allowed to destroy lasting love. Each person must develop and maintain self-control of his or her sexual faculty in order to use it properly for its purpose of procreation plus love and support for one's marriage spouse. It's difficult, but not impossible. To succeed requires that pornography must be totally avoided.

Pornographic images stored in the sense memory from scenes a person has actually viewed and from the imagination working on these are difficult, and maybe impossible, to erase. For the individual to achieve his purpose in life, his eternal salvation, will depend on his overcoming the lifetime lure of those images.

Fortunately God has made available the supernatural helps of the sacraments dispensed through the Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ, and that supernatural help is a good reason for investigating the claims of the Catholic Church. But all people, Catholic or not, should take part in combating the availability of pornography because of the harm that it does to people, to families, to society.

**Web Site: [www.catholicevidence.org](http://www.catholicevidence.org)**

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Most Reverend Robert W. Finn  
Bishop Diocese Kansas City St. Joseph

# Blessed Are the Pure In Heart

## A Pastoral Letter on the Dignity of the Human Person and the Dangers of Pornography

February 21, 2007

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### INTRODUCTION

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To the clergy, religious, lay faithful of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and to all people of good will:

***Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8): ...***

In this pastoral letter, I wish to appeal to you all as members of the Body of Christ redeemed by His love, to reflect on the dangers of pornography in our society. We will see how pornography is a serious affront to our human dignity. I will share some strategies in response to this problem. I ask you to join with me in the Diocesan effort to combat this plague by recommitting ourselves and our families to purity and chastity. In this way we will live more completely as Christ’s disciples, growing each day in the freedom of the children of God. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

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### CHAPTER I

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***Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. (Genesis 1:26): The respect due the human person is rooted in God.***

As human beings we are created in the image and likeness of God. The dignity and respect due to every human person is not assigned by any group of people, nor granted by a government. Our dignity is not contingent on what we own, or even on what we do. We cannot buy it or sell it. This dignity and worth comes from God as a complete and inestimable gift.

How are we like God? We have an immortal soul, and we are meant to live forever with God in heaven. We are called to be holy as God is holy, and through Jesus Christ and His Church we may receive the means to attain holiness. Like God, we have a rational nature, the ability to reason. However, it is not just in reason that we find the divine image within us. We are like God because we are able to love. We can make a gift of our self to another person.

***For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Cor 6: 20 ) New Life in Christ.***

Even when through sin, man had fallen and seriously injured this gift of our dignity; God continued to love us and sent us a Redeemer. We were purchased – and at a great price! Human life was embraced and elevated in the Incarnation... In the Easter or Paschal Mystery, Jesus’ passage through death into Resurrection and new life, He won a definitive victory on our behalf and established for us the hope of eternal life on high. Through Baptism we share in God’s life by means of a divine adoption. In this first sacrament, our purification is accomplished in the efficacious sign of flowing and life-giving water. God has reestablished our eternal value. Each of us is challenged: “Child of God, become fully who you are!” Are we worth dying for? Are we worth being crucified for? God’s answer is yes. Our question to ourselves must be, “Is God worth living for?”

***But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ (Mark 10:6): The dignity of human sexuality***

This dignity of the human person includes our sexuality. Our sexuality is more than our gender. It is part of our person. It gives us the ability to connect and give ourselves in love to another person. Our human sexuality is an important means by which we can share in the love and creativity of God. In marriage, a man and a woman are invited to establish a complete, exclusive and life-long union of two individuals as one. This union is the proper relationship by which it is possible for them to become co-creators with God and to let their love for one another become fruitful in bringing another human life into the world.

In the misuse of our sexuality, human weakness and selfishness can manifest themselves, sometimes in terrible ways. Human sexuality is a gift but not a toy. It is a gift to be respected and directed toward its proper end: loving and personal communion with others.

***My offenses truly I know them; my sin is always before me. (Psalm 50:5): The reality of sin.***

This vision of who we are in God is a beautiful one. But we know that it is marked by the bitter, painful reality of sin. The ability to choose to love means that we can choose, likewise, to hurt or ignore one another. Sin is real and it is destructive. The original unity of Adam and Eve was fractured by Original Sin. As important and fundamental as our human sexuality is, it also provides the means whereby our fallen human nature expresses itself in deep and sometimes horrific ways. Adultery, fornication, prostitution, rape, sexual abuse and exploitation, much of modern day slavery, crimes of passion and pornography all illustrate this fallen aspect of our human nature.

The dignity of the human person has been wounded and scarred by sin. When we sin we become less the person we are called to be in Christ. Sin dehumanizes us. The fact that Jesus was sinless does not make him less human but *more* human. Sin makes us less human. The grace of Christ restores us. Having understood the dignity of the human person, we can better examine what compromises this dignity. Jesus said, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31 ).

Everyone should look upon his neighbor as another self, bearing in mind above all his life and the means necessary for living it in a dignified way lest he follow the example of the rich man who ignored Lazarus, the poor man. Today there is an inescapable duty to make ourselves the neighbor of every man, no matter who he is. [3] Simply put, sin separates us from one another and from God. Sin impairs the relationship between the creatures, and between the human person and God. Ultimately sin is to be understood in terms of freedom and love. Sin is an abuse of freedom and a failure to love. Only in the knowledge of God’s plan for man can we grasp that sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another. [4]

***Every athlete exercises discipline in every way ... to win an imperishable crown (1 Cor 9:25) The Life of Virtue.***

Sin separates us from God while virtue seeks to unite us to God. When we have discovered God’s love for us and the high destiny which is ours, we strive again and again to attain all that God has in store for us. For this purpose the virtues are a vitally important part of the Christian life. By a virtue we mean “. . . a habitual and firm disposition to do the good.” v[5] As we grow in virtue, we seek to become more like God, more holy. Sin can produce a kind of atrophy that weakens and can even paralyze our moral muscle. Virtue is a conditioning of our moral muscle that strengthens us and helps us to maximize our potential. In the moral life there is an entire constellation of virtues regarding different situations in life. There is a virtue that calls us to respect and care for our human sexuality. We call it chastity.



***Create a clean heart in me O God. (Psalm 50:12): The virtue of chastity.***

As part of the cardinal virtue of temperance, chastity calls on us to moderate our sense pleasures, keeping the use of our sexuality within the limits of what is appropriate, using this life-giving power for only a worthy goal. [6]

But chastity is a virtue in its own right; it is a strength. It is not just the absence of something bad. It is the presence of something good. That something is respect. The virtue of chastity repeats acts of respect for others and for ourselves. Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and woman. The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift. [7]

Those who treat others as objects might experience some passing pleasure but they are not going to be happy. Chastity exists not to prevent happiness but to allow happiness to mature and blossom. Chastity helps us to see people as they really are. It helps to ground us in truth. Chastity does not stand in the way of love but rather exists to protect it. Chastity expresses love.

Before he became Pope John Paul II, Karol Wojtyla wrote a book entitled, *Love and Responsibility*. This writing emerged through his pastoral work with university students, which included marriage preparation. While some would say that the opposite of love is hate, he taught that the opposite of love is use. The idea is that if you do not love someone, you will end up using that person. ... one may never use another person as an object for one's own pleasure. Positively stated, it holds that the only proper response to a person is love. Love and Responsibility insists that the structure of love is that of an interpersonal communion.

In this we find a reflection of the Blessed Trinity as a communion of love. The future Pope insisted that chastity is always about persons. He argued "... love is an affirmation of the person or else it is not love at all." [8] The moral virtue of chastity can only be thought of in association with the theological virtue of love. Only the chaste are capable of loving. To the degree we are chaste we can love others; while to the degree we are unchaste we will use others. Thus, chastity is both a prerequisite and expression of love. Chastity is not a *no* but a *yes*, a yes to another person as a person and not as an object to be used. Chastity may involve saying no, but that no is always in service of a greater positive goal.

Chastity is necessary for all Christians, regardless of their state in life, whether they are single, married, or celibate. All are called to respect human dignity. All are called to love.

Those who are **single** are called to a chastity that respects others and refrains from sexually acting out in ways proper and exclusive to the married.

Chastity is also important for those who are **married**. For them chastity does not usually mean sexual abstinence but fidelity, and within their marriage, a deep respect and love, never treating one's spouse as an object. In this deep love they are to reveal the love between Christ and his Church and give an insight into the very mystery of God.

Those who are called to **celibacy** are also called to chastity. In perfect continence they are to love God and neighbor for the sake of the Kingdom and as a sign of the life to come.

Chastity is important for all Christians and all people of good will. Chastity calls us to love as God loves. It is ordering our sexuality according to the plan of God. Chastity is how we love others in sincerity and truth.

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## CHAPTER II: THE PROBLEM OF PORNOGRAPHY

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***Lust indulged starves the soul. (Proverbs 13:19 ): A real problem.***

Our human sexuality is created as something good by God. It is a gift. It also suffers from the effects of original sin and so can manifest not only good but evil. Pornography is one such evil.

It assaults human dignity and commodifies people and human sexuality. It starves the human soul which has a spiritual dimension which must be nurtured by giving and receiving a personal love.

While pornography is not a new problem, the development of the mass media and recent technological advances have made it much easier to access this deceptive evil.

Pornography violates modesty, chastity and truth. Human sexuality involves **modesty** which protects the privacy of individuals regarding what is most personal and intimate. To invade this privacy, and unveil what should remain hidden, [9] is an assault on human dignity.

While **chastity** exists to serve love, pornography treats another human being (or an explicit sexual description or action) as an object to be used. It can oftentimes flow from narcissism and selfishness. It replaces love with use. Remember the *Personalistic Norm*: People are never to be used as objects for one's own pleasure. People are to be loved. People are not to be treated as raw material to be used by the emotions, compulsions or addictions of others. To paraphrase John Paul II, the problem with pornography, in a sense, is not that it reveals too much of the person (exposed in the image), but that it reveals too little of the person. Pornographic images are designed to reveal nothing but the person's sexual organs and sexual faculties; nowhere does the unique personality, the depth of the person, appear. The pornographically exposed person is, quite literally, de-personalized: in becoming an 'object' for another's use, he or she ceases to be seen for what he or she is: a 'subject' who deserves love and respect.

Pornography violates **truth**. It leads people into a world of unreality, a world of fantasy that isolates them from other people and the commitments and respect which should govern our relationships. Some persons seek pornography out of loneliness and a low self esteem. It is a painful irony that their use of pornography serves only to isolate them more and more from other people. The more invested people are in this fantasy world, the more detached they become from real people, real issues and real life around them. Lust isolates. Love unites. Pornography leads people away from the truth. Chastity helps people to grow in truth.

Pornography inevitably leads to other grave sins. For example, the use of pornography is frequently coupled with masturbation, another disordered sexual activity that further turns a person in on himself, isolating him from others. Pornography use often leads one to seek other disordered forms of sexual gratification, which involve the exploitation of others for one's own selfish ends. Pornography does not remain a "private" vice; by allowing one to view other persons as means rather than ends, it eventually damages all of one's familial and social relationships.

***Tears stream from my eyes because your law is disobeyed. (Psalm 118:136):***

***The path of sinners is smooth stones that end in the depths of the nether world. (Sirach 21:10): The bitter fruit of pornography.***

The statistics are staggering. But behind all this there are not just numbers, there are people whose lives are harmed, and whose eternal salvation is jeopardized. There are those exploited by pornography, those who use it and then the family and associates of both groups. Pornography affects lives, moral strength, relationships, marriages, the lives of children, community life, and even such things as property value and community safety.

Sometimes those who use pornography claim, “I’m not hurting anyone.” Pornography, like all sinful behavior, offends the one sinned against, the one who sins and God, the source of all truth. The destructive work of the devil, who Sacred Scripture calls “the father of lies,” is to distort in us our sense of what is good. He tells us that others are for our use and enjoyment; that satisfying our cravings will make us happy. But the “happiness” is fleeting. We are spiritual beings sharing God’s own life, and this enticing adventure has no spiritual substance. It leaves us deceived, ashamed, unfulfilled and confused.

Within the person, pornography wreaks harm physically, emotionally and spiritually. Pornography can become as physically and chemically addictive as alcohol, drugs or gambling. The graphic images of pornography burn themselves into our sense imagination. The more deeply and frequently this happens, the harder the road to freedom will be. Like other addictions, pornography is a progressive affliction. It takes more and more graphic presentations to achieve the desired effect. As this continues it can lead to acting out and to crime.

Pornography stunts a person emotionally. Those addicted may withdraw from friends, family and even their own spouses. Pornography leads them into a world of unreality with idealized, unrealistic figures who do not engage one in a truly human manner. As people withdraw, their interpersonal skills and relationships weaken. They look at others as objects rather than as people with the capacity for friendship and love. They become preoccupied with every situation and person they encounter: will it provide for me the gratification I seek? If one is seriously mired in this vice, the addictive behavior often persists even after it leads to obviously damaging consequences, e.g., destruction of a marital relationship or loss of a job from viewing pornography at work. In a real sense, one can become enslaved to pornography in a manner analogous to drug addiction. As with other addictions, the viewer requires more and more explicit, disordered material to achieve the same effect; this produces a downward spiral that becomes progressively more difficult to correct.

The spiritual life is about growing more in the image of God. Pornography makes us less like God as it leads people to treat others as objects and not as unrepeatable gifts of God. Pornography leads one not to make a greater gift of oneself in love, not to serve but rather to be served. In the end one becomes caught and enslaved in hurtful habits rather than virtue. Viewing pornography for this distorted venereal pleasure is, objectively, a mortal sin. It is seriously contrary to the life God intends for others and ourselves. It kills the life of sanctifying grace. If we are in serious sin we must not approach Holy Communion until we have received sacramental confession. Often we are too ashamed to come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and we wander further away from the life of God. Our ability to function as a living member of the Body of Christ is impaired. Because this scenario is so widespread today, we must be concerned about the state of our parishes and families. Still, because God’s initiative of grace remains at work, we must not despair. At any time, He stands ready to assist us. We must entrust ourselves to His mercy and return to the Sacrament for forgiveness and a new beginning.

Pornography harms others. It exploits other people, usually women but also men and children. To engage in pornography is to support this terrible and scarring exploitation. To participate financially in this contributes to an industry that perpetuates a grave moral evil. Slavery, including sexual slavery, is a real and growing problem today. One reason it grows is because there is a demand for it. Furthermore, after engaging in pornography, the user is more likely to look upon other people as objects. As pornography use progresses marriages can falter and collapse. This results in shame, heartbreak and misery for the spouses and for children who can carry emotional scars into adulthood and their own marriages. Children and young people who are exposed to pornography experience assaults on their human dignity and roadblocks to authentic human development. As pornography increases, so does crime. Sex offenses are 506% greater in Phoenix, Arizona areas where Sexually Oriented Businesses are located. [10]

Pornography is not harmless; it is a grave, dehumanizing evil.

In all this, pornography offends God. It misuses His gifts of freedom, the human body and love. We are the artwork of God (cf. Eph 2:10) and pornography defaces His masterpiece.

***Go not after your lusts, but keep your desires in check. (Sirach 18:30):***

... Children whose parents correctly restrict computer access in private rooms of the house, now may obtain images through handheld devices, away from supervision. The culture around us that so readily provides an environment and market for these kinds of evils is a significant contributing factor to the problem of pornography and other sins. The technology itself is not evil. The problem lies in the abuse of technology and its use in evil ways. Like dynamite, it is something powerful that demands proper handling. It can be used to either serve or assault humanity.

We live in a culture that is increasingly dark and death-dealing. We can easily begin to absorb these negative influences – taking them in like a plant absorbs, through its roots, what is in the soil or “culture” in which it is planted. We become numb and we don’t even realize that we are slowly being poisoned. This problem is serious and it demands our response.

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### **CHAPTER III: RESPONDING TO THE PROBLEM**

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***What is your name? (Mark 5:9):***

**Facing and naming the problem.**

This real and serious problem demands of us a real and serious response. It is easier to turn away and pretend it does not exist, but it does exist, and we must do what we can. We should not wait for the abduction, rape or murder of a young girl or boy in our family, another ruined marriage, a job lost, or another child’s life being devastated to get us concerned about this issue.

The stakes are just too high.

The first step in solving any problem is to point it out, to name it. While exorcizing the Gerasene demoniac, Jesus asked, “What is your name?” (Mark 5:9). In Semitic thought to know the name is to begin to have some power over it. We find a modern equivalent of this in the Twelve Step Spirituality of such groups as Alcoholics Anonymous. The first step in this transforming spirituality is to admit that in the face of one’s addiction one is powerless. People do not address problems that they refuse to admit.

...

The evils with which we struggle often keep us bound up in silence. Particularly with something like pornography, the fear, embarrassment and shame can be intense. Someone with a deep spiritual insight into all this was St. Ignatius Loyola. He noted:

When the enemy of human nature tempts a just soul with his wiles and seductions, he earnestly desires that they be received secretly and kept secret. But if one manifests them to a confessor, or to some other spiritual person who understands his deceits and malicious designs, the evil one is very much vexed. For he knows that he cannot succeed in his evil undertaking, once his evident deceits have been revealed. [11]

A prerequisite for use of pornography is some sort of silence. To break this silence by speaking to another person can be frightening, but also liberating.

***I said: ‘I will confess my offense to the Lord.’ And you, Lord, have forgiven the guilt of my sin. (Psalm 32:5): The Sacrament of Penance.***

Acknowledging the problem for ourselves is an important first step. As St. Ignatius noted, this can be done in the Sacrament of Penance. This sacrament is a rich source of God's strength and spiritual health. It is the normal means for us – instituted by Christ and provided by the Church – to be reconciled and receive spiritual healing. Stated simply, pornography is sinful and the Sacrament of Penance removes sin. This sacrament puts us in touch with the depth of God's merciful love. It removes what is bad. It strengthens us with what is good, with God's grace.

The fruits of this sacrament are many. The Catechism notes that it restores us to God's grace and joins us in friendship with God. It brings a spiritual resurrection drawing us into the Paschal Mystery as we die to our sinfulness and rise to new life in Christ. The Sacrament of Penance reconciles us to the Church and revitalizes the life of the repentant sinner. [12]

For anyone struggling with pornography, the Sacrament of Reconciliation offers an infallible source of healing grace. Jesus spoke of the joy in heaven over one repentant sinner (Luke 15:10); when worthily celebrated, this sacrament causes the angels to rejoice. In this sacrament, we encounter Christ the Divine physician. When we open our wound to Him, He can begin to heal us with His grace.

***Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? (Luke 14: 28): What can we do?***

This pastoral letter is offered as part of a comprehensive effort within the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph to make progress in the battle against pornography and its destructive effects in individuals, our families, and our society. The tactic we are taking is only secondarily one of legislative advocacy against the purveyors of pornography. The injustice against the actors or participants in pornographic media deserves to be addressed and corrected. I encourage and support those who – in accord with their office and competence -- succeed in turning back this plague. We know this demon is "legion," and still we persevere in hope. Our effort and my purpose in writing is primarily to help us all grow spiritually stronger in our fight against pornography. We must help each other in a way of discipleship that is grounded in chastity and that purity of heart which helps us see God.

***We are contending not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. (Eph 6:12.): Develop a plan to stay strong.***

We have spoken about the first and necessary step in our spiritual battle against the lies and entanglements of pornography. Sincere repentance turns our sight again toward God and the Sacrament of Reconciliation renews within us the grace and life of Christ.

In order to persevere we must develop a plan to "stay sober" and avoid the intoxication of pornography. We will not succeed if we think we can easily put aside the temptations to use pornography. We must avoid the occasions of sin, that is, anything that leads us toward it. What are our particular weaknesses in regard to these attractions? In honesty and humility we must often run from them like we would run from a wild animal against which we had no sufficient defense.

We are more vulnerable to secret sins: 1) when we are alone or with certain people; 2) when the materials are available; and 3) when we have time on our hands.

**Avoiding a secretive or enticing environment.** We must be careful and plan out what we do when we are in private. Away from others we must be on our guard, mindful of our weakness. Can we invite someone to monitor our computer? Random monitoring is a practice in many business offices. Sometimes the danger of this keeps people from some instances of viewing pornography. The engagement of an accountability partner who receives a report of websites we have visited may help us stay honest in this regard (cf Appendix II). At home, a computer should be located in the open rather in the private room.

Similarly, we must avoid situations where the company of certain people might unduly pressure us to partake in the use of materials, such as pornographic videos or magazines. We must try to cultivate healthy and supportive friendships. As we get stronger, we can try to lead our associates into activities that are not so degrading to human dignity.

**Eliminating pornographic materials.** We must remove any pornography that is readily available. Eliminate your access as quickly as possible. Destroy the videos, throw out the photos and magazines, cancel the problematic cable or satellite channels. Because we have grown to depend on computers, this is harder when dealing with Internet pornography. We can first remove computer bookmarks that provide easy access. Use a filter (see Appendix II). If you knew that eating certain foods or taking certain drugs to which you are allergic would kill you, you would scrupulously avoid these things. If getting rid of the computer is the only way to assure your chastity – your sexual sobriety – such measures may be necessary for the life of your soul.

If the television in your hotel room is a danger, don't even turn it on. Bring reading or work to do. Go to the exercise room. Talk to a friend, or your spouse or children on the phone. Persons who are "problem drinkers" and have been through treatment programs know that they must never take a drink again, and they stay away from the bar. At home, more and more families are using blocking devices on their television sets, or using the TV only occasionally to watch a family-friendly movie or a sports event together.

**Being good stewards of our time.** Idle time may be the occasion for our use of pornography. We learned the truism, "The idle mind is the devil's playground." We don't want to become frenetic in our activity. There is value in taking time for rest and relaxation, but we must be good stewards of our time. Nearly a generation ago I heard someone describe television as "company without commitment." We should use our time to constructively do things that are part of the direction we want for our life, that express and strengthen our commitments to others.

**Knowing our weaknesses.** We may begin to awaken our desire for explicit pornography even by the use of (increasingly revealing and suggestive) television shows, reality TV, or immodest advertisements, magazines not generally regarded as erotic (e.g., in the case of fetish), novels with explicit scenes that we know play to our attractions. Being honest about our individual weaknesses in these areas will help us avoid the "occasions of sin," – remote or near occasions – that may cause our downfall. To succeed in this battle we have to calculate our strengths and weaknesses and realize how we can account for both. Don't try to fight the battle "inside the fortress;" engage the enemy before he breaches your defenses. Learn to see the danger coming before it gets too close or too strong.

***You must, therefore, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5: 48):***  
**Develop a plan to grow holy as a disciple.**

The Beatitudes and the rest of Christ's *Sermon on the Mount* express a model for conscientious and faithful discipleship. It is not enough to remove the bad. We must bring in the good. If we do not replace the bad with something good it can more easily return (Cf. Luke 11:24 -26).

Through repentance and Sacramental Reconciliation we move out of darkness into the light but we need a program for staying in the light. The particulars of this program will include some essential elements.

**Commitment to daily prayer.** The real core of this prayer must be a growing expression of our relationship to God our Father, to Jesus Christ who redeems us, and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and helps us to be more like Christ in the world. We need to hear God's affirmation of us – our innate goodness and dignity – so we can begin to love others in a similar way. This is more than just saying prayers, as important as that is. It is grounding our self in God. It is opening our hearts and letting Him speak His word of love, mercy, comfort and challenge to us.

Our Catholic tradition is tremendously rich with many types of prayer. Just a few are Eucharistic Adoration, *Lectio Divina* (prayerfully reading the Sacred Scriptures), meditation, contemplation, and devotional prayers including the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the Stations of the Cross. Our rich and varied tradition exists to help us grow more deeply in the life of God. Meditation, vivid reflection on the mysteries, life and activity of Christ, and the use of religious pictures, statues, etc., provide positive images in the sense imagination and memory. These can begin to supplant images and visual fantasies that are occasions of sin for us. [13]

**Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.** For us as Catholics the Mass and the worthy reception of the Eucharist are the font from which we draw our spiritual strength and the highest expression of our worship and thanks to God. Here Jesus literally makes a gift of Himself to us. Here we enter into the hour of His sacrifice. To share in the Eucharist every Sunday and holy day of obligation strengthens us, and keeps us in the communion of the Church. Participating in Mass more often and receiving communion, provided we have not alienated our self from God by serious sin, can be of inestimable help to us to stay in the light.

**Daily Examination of Conscience and Frequent Confession.** No one can hope to seriously grow in the spiritual life without the constant repentance to which Christ calls us. Particularly when we are trying to break the habits of destructive sins, a brief recollection of our day in which we renew our sorrow for our sins and track our progress prepares us for a worthy celebration of Confession. The saints tell us to keep our daily examination of conscience cursory so as not to rekindle the passion of our sins. Satan's new temptations and occasional discouragement will come. But we must persevere in hope despite our setbacks. An honest, integral, and humble Confession monthly or more often, to the same confessor if possible, will do us tremendous good if we persevere and do not lose heart.

Like going to the doctor, receiving Reconciliation is both curative and preventive. It is curative because it removes sin and it is preventive because it strengthens us and allows us to stay healthy. Even if we are not guilty of any mortal sin, this sacrament strengthens us and helps us to keep running smoothly. I can testify to the great importance of frequent confession in my own spiritual journey. It is one valuable way I also try to stay close to Christ and keep the mystery of divine mercy and reconciliation alive in my own life.

**Utilize good Spiritual Reading.** Another means of support is through study. As God's word to us the Bible is life giving and irreplaceable. Our tradition is rich in spiritual classics, especially the biographies of the saints or their own writings. Reading the encyclicals of the Popes and other magisterial teachings will help us in our understanding of revealed truth.

**Awareness of the Presence of God.** Making a faith-filled dedication of our self and our efforts to God each day – a morning offering – and renewing our awareness of His presence and love in the midst of our daily activities will help to sanctify all the everyday actions we undertake. Using devotional items or *sacramentals*, such as a blessed medal or scapular can be a source of grace and remind us of our relationship with God and as members of His Body the Church. Keeping a religious medal, holy card or icon on or near the screen of your computer, or on top of the television, can help us be aware of our commitment to live a new life in Christ.

***Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* (2 Corinthians 6:2): Grow Strong in the Exercise of the Virtues.**

Developing a plan for growing in holiness will be more complete as we begin to generously exercise an apostolic Christian love. We must go "beyond our self," reaching out to others out of love for Christ. This active charity expressed in an unselfish and generous love is the antidote to pornography and other sexually-expressed symptoms of selfishness.

**Temperance** in the exercise of our sexual appetites, necessary for succeeding against the lures of pornography, can be strengthened when we exercise temperance in the use of food and drink. The more we learn to strengthen our will by occasionally denying ourselves licit enjoyments, the more we will likely succeed in the temperance which supports chastity. When

we do this out of a motive of love of Christ, this “discipline” becomes “discipleship.” It is a kind of spiritual conditioning that strengthens us for other challenges that will come.

**Modesty** is decency and discretion in the way we dress, act and speak. It protects the mystery of persons and their love. [14] Living the habit of modesty in dress can help to foil the voyeuristic tendencies that are part of pornography. A renewed commitment to modesty helps us combat the injustice of pornography which undermines the dignity of the person. “Custody of the eyes” means we turn away from those gazes that are intended for our gratification and curiosity. This age-old practice can help us avoid occasions of sin that otherwise lead us to exploit others.

**Purity** is one of the most wonderful characteristics of the love and light of Jesus Christ. Exposed to Christ’s purity we are purified. Those who are in love seek to express their gift of self with an undivided heart and in a way that cares for the total well-being of the other. The exploitative use of others through pornography is a contradiction of this purity which characterizes God’s love and must be the model for our love. As we reflect on our natural exercise of purity in the relationships we have with our children, our parents and siblings, we will begin to increase our capacity to love other persons as well with a pure and undivided heart.

**Chastity**, as we have described at length above, can be exercised in positive ways. It means treating others with the respect due them in accord with their human dignity and worth – something that comes from God Himself. Chastity is the responsible use of our affective life in the way that is most appropriate in light of our relationship. Allowing our self to be sexually gratified by someone we do not know in any way – which happens in pornography – is the epitome of unchastity. Determining to relate to each person in the way that best accords with their dignity and the nature of our relationship is a positive exercise of chastity. Exercising chastity – consciously loving people in this deeply respectful way - actually strengthens us against acts of unchastity. What are we saying? One way to successfully turn away the temptation of pornography is to “build up” the virtues of Temperance, Modesty, Purity and Chastity. The final cause – the ultimate goal - of all the virtues is charity which must express itself in the generous gift of self.

***A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; he who finds one finds a treasure. (Sirach 6:14):***  
**Developing a support system.**

People who have overcome addictions will insist you will not do so by yourself. Admitting the issue, examining oneself, daily prayer, and seeking forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance are all good, important and holy steps. A knowledgeable Spiritual Director can help us develop and keep the plan of life that we have suggested above.

However, if you or someone you know has reached the point of an addiction or even just a compulsion, more help may be necessary. It is important to develop a support system. This system may involve counseling with a competent professional. It may involve a support group. Our diocese already offers one such support group for men and we hope to establish another for women. The National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families sponsors a phone line for those who struggle with pornography and for those who try to help them (cf. Appendix II).

Another practice becoming more popular today is that of an accountability group. A number of individuals will gather on a regular basis to share struggles and successes. They give each other permission to probe, ask questions and to challenge fellow members.

There are some additional resources for those struggling with Internet pornography. One is to purchase a computer filter and have a friend download and secure it with a password not to be shared with you. Another is an accountability service that will send a report of every site you visit online to two accountability friends. This can be used in conjunction with a filter.



The company we keep can hurt or help us in our efforts. The purpose of any friendship is for people to lift each other up, not to drag each other down. If friends lead us into sin, they are not true friends and it is necessary to find those who would be true friends.

Our support system does not just stop with professionals and friends. There is a whole other category of a different set of professionals and friends. We call them the saints. These holy men and women *inspire* us by their heroic lives, give us an example to be *imitated* and help us by their constant *intercession*. [15] The Blessed Virgin Mary shows us what it means to be faithful to God in purity of heart. She is our Mother Most Pure, Mother Most Chaste, Mother Inviolable, Mother undefiled [16] and with her prayers helps us to follow her Son in truth. St. Joseph is similarly invoked as Chaste and Just. ... ask for their help for all those struggling with pornography.

St. Maria Goretti (1890-1902), and St. Charles Lwanga (d. 1886), are but two examples of young people who were martyred rather than give in to sexual impurity. Other saints are known for their conversion from a sinful life. They are models for us of what is possible when we give ourselves over to Christ's transforming grace. May the faithfulness and chastity of these heavenly friends lead us to greater fidelity and chastity according to our state in life.

***Let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people. (I Chron 19:13):***  
**Take Action.**

There is much at stake here. This is a problem that calls for action from all of us: individually and as the Church.

*To those who struggle with pornography* – Do not give up! This may be an occasional problem, an outright addiction or a problem somewhere in between. Wherever you may be, be honest with yourself. Seek the Sacrament of Penance. Find another trustworthy and dependable person to assist and support you.

Examine your life and see what disposes you to this behavior. Get a computer filter ... Persevere and don't lose heart!

*To parents* – Your role in the lives of your children is irreplaceable. Your task is twofold: to protect and to equip. There are many things you can do to protect your children. You have locks on the doors of your home to protect them from unwanted strangers. Your computers are unlocked doors to your children unless you establish some securities.

- Keep the computer in a public part of the house.
- Equip your Internet program with a password so your children cannot access the Internet unless you log on.
- Get a computer filter.
- Be proactive. Do not assume such things only happen in other families. Before allowing your child to spend the night at a friend's house, ask the parents if they have a filter on their computer. This problem is much larger than the Internet. In addition to published pornography, there are chat rooms, iPods and camera cell phones. These can easily be misused and become a means of exposing children and young people to pornography.

Blogs pose another problem. If your child has a blog, visit it often. See to it that no addresses, phone numbers or other types of personally identifying information are listed nor any lewd or suggestive materials. Some blog sites can be set so that only chosen friends may access the site. Protection is the first important step.

The second step is also important: Equip your children to deal with a world where so much pornography is so easily available. To keep filters and other security measures on your

computer is necessary, but eventually your children will be around an unfiltered computer. Will they at that point be sufficiently educated and morally strong to resist this evil?

At appropriate moments parents have the responsibility to teach their children about the beauties of our God-given sexuality and the truth of sexual morality. This calls for study of the Church's teaching, [17] and right living on the part of the parents. It must be admitted that the widespread use of artificial contraceptives has had a devastating and systemic effect on the family and the culture. Parents who have not yet come to grips with the responsible use of their own married sexuality will find it more difficult to communicate effectively to their children about the right ordering of these vital human powers – powers which have their most significant expression in life-long love directed toward the procreation of life.

Pray together as a family. Go to Mass and to Confession together. Have meals together. Set rules and regulations about the use of the phone, TV, video games, and the Internet. Parents, teach your children about the blessedness of pure, chaste love, and help them find good reading. You cannot keep them from all of the dangers they will eventually face, but you can equip them to deal with such dangers.

...

*To those in public office*—The right to free speech is a precious one that I deeply value and defend. The Supreme Court has ruled that obscenity is not protected speech although the definition of obscenity is left to the local communities.

Pornography can bring with it a weakening of marriage and family, an increase of crime and a decline of property values. For the economic as well as the moral good of those you are sworn to serve, please work against pornography and for the good of all.

*To counselors, doctors and other health care professionals* – You too are in a special position to help people within a confidential setting. Internet addiction and Internet pornography have serious implications. In particular, I ask counselors, psychologists and doctors to learn more about helping people with these problems. I further ask you to then share that wisdom with parents, clergy and the general public in a way that respects the dignity of the human person and the God-given meaning and purpose of human sexuality. Realize and make allowances for the curative benefits of supernatural faith as part of the motivation and potential for renewal in those who suffer under pornography's hurtful effects.

*Finally, to all people*—I ask all of us, myself included, to daily strive to grow in purity of heart and chastity according to our state in life. This is the road to true happiness and this is how we grow in love and thus become more like God. Purity of heart is not merely a nice virtue. It opens up for us the vision of God.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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***Let us cast off the deed of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Romans 13:12):***  
**The light of God's mercy.**

Dear friends, this problem of pornography affects all of us. It involves not only our spiritual life and our moral health but the health of our nation and our world. It assaults our human dignity rooted in the image and likeness of God and further ennobled by the Incarnation. Pornography is a struggle for many people. Prevention can do tremendous good. Neglect can be responsible for horrendous and lifelong harm. Children and young people must be protected and equipped to deal with these and other problems facing us today.

Moreover, people need the Church's positive message about human sexuality. Chastity calls all of us to love as God loves. Purity of heart is a blessed path of discipleship. At times we will stumble but with the mercy of God we continue to follow in the way of light, life and love.

One wise instruction St. Benedict wrote in his Holy Rule is the pithy but profound statement,

“Never despair of God’s Mercy.” [18] The most serious temptation anyone can face is to doubt the reality of God’s love and mercy. While we can never presume on that mercy, we must never let go of that most powerful and life-giving hope. St. John, the beloved disciple, in his words addressed to the early Christian Churches also reassures us.

My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn 2: 1-2).

If you remember just one sentence from this letter let it be this:

*Never despair of God’s mercy.*

In Christ and Mary,

Most Reverend Robert W. Finn  
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph  
Ash Wednesday ~ February 21, 2007

# **SEX, LOVE, MARRIAGE, FAMILY --- DESIGNED TO GO TOGETHER**

The Catholic Church’s teachings regarding sexual morality are not a set of arbitrary rules concocted by popes and bishops just to make things difficult for people. Rather, they are moral laws given by God, the Author of human nature, who gave the Church the task of promulgating His laws and adapting His principles to new situations as they arise.

Catholic teaching about sex is fully reasonable and comes to us from God’s revelation, both through human nature and through Holy Scripture.

Our attempts to consider the purpose of sex are likely to be colored over by strong feelings, emotions, passions, regarding our own sexuality, so we need to put aside those subjective feelings and make a strong effort to be as objective as possible.

Also, we have to view the purpose of sexuality, not just from the viewpoint of us human beings who possess the sexual faculty, but rather from the viewpoint of the Creator, the one who gave us the faculty. What is God’s thinking on it? And how can we know?

When we are born there’s nothing apparent that indicates what line of work we will pursue. Yet from the instant of our conception we are given a potential to be one or the other of two types of people -- fathers or mothers. We are male or female. If God gave us this capability at our very conception, it must be extremely important to Him. Why did He give us sexuality? And how does He want us to use it?

**Finding the Purpose**

If we want to know the purpose of anything we must ask, “What does this thing do that nothing else does?” So, why did God make human beings to be either male or female? The answer is that this makes reproduction possible; the two sexes are complementary to each other in the specific way that their mutual sexual activity brings life to other human beings, and nothing else does that.

We must also ask, “For what other purpose is the division into male and female absolutely necessary?”

And the answer is, “Nothing.” Oh, sure, there’s sexual pleasure, but people have found ways to obtain that pleasure without male and female both being involved.

So we have to say that the pleasure is properly a byproduct of the act that gives us reproduction. From this we surely conclude that the purpose of sex is reproduction; it produces another human being. The pleasure that accompanies sex is the motivation God plants there so we will use it.

The human beings who result from the use of sex themselves have a purpose, a purpose that is given by the Creator of each of us. That purpose does not come from the parents for each child, but from the Initiator of the process for all of us. The man and woman provide the sperm and the egg necessary for new life, but only God provides the spiritual soul, the component that will live forever and in which reside the intellect and will of the human being. The parents are merely cooperators in God’s creative action.

The reason God creates each of us is because He wants us to get to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him in this life, and to live with Him forever in heaven.

Gaining heaven is certainly good for us, but it’s also true that God wants all the people He creates to live eternally with Him.

## **Growth to Maturity**

Achieving one's human purpose means the child must grow to a level of maturity – not just physical, but also intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual maturity.

This is a process that takes nine months plus about twenty years. The man and the woman who give life to the child have a responsibility to God and to the child to bring that child to this full level of maturity, so that the new human being can strive for and achieve his or her own God-given purpose.

Achieving this level of maturity requires that the baby/child/adolescent/young adult be raised in a caring environment, a loving family, in which father and mother truly love each other, putting their partner's needs and the children's needs before their own. A love that's planned to last only until the children have become mature is not really a love at all; it has to be a love for as long as the parents shall live. Otherwise it's not capable of providing the fully loving environment needed for the proper raising of a family.

## **Help for the Parents' Purpose**

Naturally, God also desires that the parents achieve their own purpose of eternal life with Him. The very real advantages of their loving union during life are themselves the means of enabling them to provide for each other the mutual help, including their use of sex, to attain their salvation in the life that follows this.

It has been pointed out that the loving use of sex by the man and woman, resulting in the procreation of a child, mirrors the relationship of persons within the Trinity, in which Father and Son generate the Holy Spirit, a third Person, equal in dignity to the first two.

## **Basic Conclusions**

So we can say that, while the purpose of sexuality is procreation, marriage has a two-fold purpose:

--bringing about the stable, loving environment for children to grow to a level of maturity that gives them their best chance for gaining heaven, and it does this by bonding the husband and wife to each other through their use of sex;

--giving the husband and wife the means of assisting each other in the things they need to gain heaven, including the legitimate outlet for the sexuality that God wants them to use, even when their actions are not by nature capable of generating children. Sex really involves three persons – a man, a woman and also God, who creates the human soul in the newly-conceived child.

--To engage in a sex act that allows human life, but without the environment of a legitimate family, is to frustrate the chance for full development that God intends for the child.

--To take the pleasure of sex while preventing a new human life is to deny God His specific role in the process, and to deny Him the child He wants to live with Him forever in heaven.

Catholic teaching has always been that the use of sex is legitimate only:

---between one man and one woman

---validly, legitimately and exclusively married to each other for life

---and under circumstances in which no positive steps are taken to prevent conception.

Obviously, this rules out a number of vices, some natural in the sense of being able to result in reproduction (adultery, fornication) and others unnatural in the sense of not being capable of reproduction (masturbation, bestiality, contraception, sodomy).

It's true that, since God gave us a sexual faculty, He wants us to use it, but only for His purpose, and therefore within the limits He sets out in human nature.

### **Recreational Sex, Trivialized Marriage and Pornography**

But obstacles exist to our use of sex in the way that God intends. The first of these is the denial of the very purpose of sex by claiming that it exists simply for recreation and that people may use it whenever and with whomever they wish, without any regard for God, the rights of spouses or the lives of children.

Regarding sex as simply recreational leads to yet another harmful attitude – namely, that marriage is simply an arrangement between the parties, who are free to terminate it whenever they choose, and in which God is irrelevant and there is no responsibility for accepting and raising children.

Feeding this acceptance of recreational sex is pornography, the presentation of sexual images in magazines, books, movies, television, the Internet and other forms of the media.

Pornography quickly becomes addictive because chemicals in the human brain cause the sexual images to become strongly fixed in the person's imagination, so that the person is led to seek ever more intense images, then to employ force to compel others to act out with them the scenes that pornography has planted in their imagination. Often it eventually leads to non-sexual forms of violence.

Pornography leads to a breakdown in the self-control needed for the legitimate use of sex and turns a person away from pursuing his or her purpose in life. It destroys marriages because the addict becomes more attached to the images than to his wife. Paradoxically it produces a lack of feeling in an addicted husband, which often leads to impotence in his relations with his wife.

### **Contraception in Marriage**

Contraception, the deliberate prevention of children, is the third major obstacle to the proper use of sexuality. It is destructive of the love needed between the spouses because it constitutes self-gratification without regard for the potential child, the will of God, and even for one's partner.

On-going use of contraception will have the effect of causing the sensation of sex to appear more important than love for one's partner, and often leads to extramarital affairs and to divorce.

The evil of contraception involves

---the taking of the physical pleasure of sex while denying God His specific role in the creation of children;

---the denial to God of the new human person whom He wishes to live with Him forever; and

---the harm done to the love required in marriage.

At first it may appear that using contraception is a way of expressing love for one's partner. But love of another person consists, not just in sharing pleasure with them and trying to spare them from consequences that appear difficult. True love consists in a willingness to sacrifice one's

own comfort for the sake of others, in this case the potential child. Furthermore, the bond of union is made strongest by mutual sacrifice, by accepting hardships for a worthwhile purpose, and facing difficult challenges together.

All forms of contraception are wrong:

—preventing the delivery of sperm or ovum, as by sterilization or the pill’s simulating an already existing pregnancy

—withdrawal before the sex act is complete

—physical barriers, chemicals or drugs which prevent the sperm from making contact with the egg

—preventing a fertilized egg from receiving the nourishment needed to grow. (This latter method is actually abortion, since a fertilized egg is already a human being.)

Contraception is the sexual counterpart of an eating disorder called bulimia, in which a person is so obsessed with the taste of food that they gorge themselves and then regurgitate in order to be able to consume even more food.

At the marriage ceremony couples promise to accept all the children God will send to them. To attempt marriage with the intention that all their marriage acts would be contraceptive would render the marriage null and void.

Contraception outside of marriage is part of an act that is already wrong in itself, besides leading to a harmful acceptance of recreational sex that can later carry forward into a marriage. The only answer is abstinence.

### Scripture and Tradition

Holy Scripture tells us that contraception was punished by God with immediate death in the case of Onan because of his deliberately spilling his seed (Gen 38:9-10). Critics try to argue that Onan’s offense was that of refusing to have children by the wife of his deceased brother, but the penalty for that is not death (Deut 25: 5-10) and Onan’s brother, Shelah, was not put to death even though he did not marry the widow either. (Gen 38:11-14)

Contraception was held to be wrong in the earliest moral pronouncement of the Church, the *Didache* (mid 2nd cent). Fathers of the Church through the years, including Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, concur. Twentieth-century popes Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II, all agree, as did Vatican Council II.

Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, predicted that widespread contraception would lead to a general decline in morality, a loss of respect for women, an increase in extra-marital affairs, and the attempt by governments to coerce couples into limiting their families by this means, all of which has come to pass.

Lately it has been found that the runoff, through sewers into streams and rivers, of bodily waste from women using contraceptive pills has caused recent generations of fresh water fish to be overwhelmingly female, thereby sharply curtailing their reproduction. Some countries are concerned about overpopulation.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that a nation has the right to “intervene to orient the demography of the population,” but only by “objective and respectful information,” and not by “authoritarian, coercive measures.” (n.2372)

## Natural Family Planning

In cases where another pregnancy would cause truly grave hardship, such as for medical or financial reasons, couples may resort to Natural Family Planning, and thereby limit their use of sex to times when conception is unlikely. The woman's times of infertility can now be forecast very accurately from signs within her body, and there is no moral wrong in abstaining from an act one is not required to perform.

Natural Family Planning is highly effective, involves almost no cost and has no harmful side effects. Couples using Natural Family Planning report that it helps them to come emotionally closer since it requires a high degree of communication between them. Such couples experience a very low rate of divorce.

**Editor's Note: A warning is necessary here about the overuse and misuse of NFP in modern times. Traditional Catholics have rightly taken a stance that questions the legitimacy of the excessive modern-day promotion of NFP in the Conciliar Church which tends to encourage overuse of NFP by couples and underplays the definition of "grave hardship". For more information, see the below articles which contain much valuable and essential information:**

**NFP: An Unhappy Compromise:**

<http://sspx.org/en/nfp-unhappy-compromise>

**A Danger to Marital Love and Fidelity: NFP**

<http://sspx.org/en/danger-marital-love-and-fidelity-nfp>

**The Problem of Natural Family Planning:**

<http://sspx.org/en/news-events/news/problem-natural-family-planning-3180>

## Conception Outside the Marriage Act

Just as the parents have a responsibility in marriage to accept and raise the children God entrusts to them, they also have a responsibility to accept God's will if He chooses not to make them natural parents. They may adopt a child who needs caring, but they may not attempt to bring about a union of sperm and ovum outside their marriage act since the procreative and the unitive aspects of the act must be kept together. This rules out surrogate motherhood and *In vitro* fertilization, which generally leads to abortion of "surplus" embryos.

## The Way to Happiness

Human happiness will ultimately be found in heaven, living with our all-loving God for all eternity. For the vast majority of people its closest approximation in this life is within a loving family where each member finds his or her purpose in loving God and one another and in carrying out God's will.

The obstacles to this happiness must be removed. Self-gratification must never be allowed to destroy lasting love. Each person must develop and maintain self-control of his or her sexual faculty in order to use it properly for its primary purpose of procreation and its secondary purpose in marriage of support for one's spouse. It's difficult for many, but not impossible. To succeed requires that pornography must be totally avoided. For Catholics it is most helpful to make frequent use of God's on-going assistance through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.

**Web Site: [www.catholicvidence.org](http://www.catholicvidence.org)**

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# Bought with a Price: Every Man’s Duty to Protect Himself and His Family from a Pornographic Culture

*“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)*

Most Rev. Paul S. Loverde  
Bishop of Arlington  
Solemnity of Saint Joseph  
March 19, 2014

...

God grant you His priceless gift of purity and peace.  
Faithfully in the Heart of Christ,  
Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde  
Bishop of Arlington

Preface

**Foreword**  
**By Matt Fradd**

...

As a U.S. Justice Department memo warned, “Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible by so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions.” If that sounds about right, it will be sobering to consider that it was written in 1996—before wireless broadband, before iPads, before selfies and sexting. Before pornography took over twelve percent of the Internet, with more than 25 million sites today raking in over \$5 billion a year.

Before it was considered common practice, as it is today, for porn consumption to begin with a first encounter around age 11 and go on to radically shape the ideas that teens and young adults have about sexual intimacy.

This new edition of *Bought with a Price*, then, could not have come at a more critical time.

...

Remember, there is only one sin which God will not forgive. What is that sin? The one we refuse to ask forgiveness for. Be assured of God’s love for you. Be assured of His infinite mercy. The same God who forgave Moses the murderer, Rahab the prostitute, David the adulterer, Peter the denier, and Paul the Christian-murderer will forgive you also, and convert your heart.

And there’s even better news. Scripture promises that “where sin increased, grace abounded all the more” (Rom. 5:20). So we have here not just a struggle, but an opportunity to tap into a massive outpouring of God’s grace. Think about it. Every person, every Christian, every saint who lived before the Internet lacked one gift that we have: the ability to choose Christ by rejecting, day after day, this uniquely modern and anonymous sin of porn. So let your heart not be troubled but grateful—for God’s inexhaustible mercy, for the powerful help we get from the Church’s sacraments and teachers like Bishop Loverde, and for this almost unprecedented chance to grow in virtue by striving to walk the path of purity.

Matt Fradd works for Covenant Eyes and is author of the book *Delivered: True Stories of Men and Women Who Turned from Porn to Purity*. A speaker and Catholic apologist, Matt has produced many resources on pornography and purity, including *Porn: 7 Myths Exposed*, *The Ugly Truth*, *The Man Talk*, and ThePornEffect.com. He lives in Atlanta with his wife Cameron and their three children.

**Introduction**

In my nearly fifty years as a priest, I have seen the evil of pornography spread like a plague throughout our culture. What was once the shameful and occasional vice of the few has become the mainstream entertainment for the many—through the Internet, cable, satellite and broadcast television, smart phones and even portable gaming and entertainment devices designed for children and teenagers. Never before have so many Americans been so tempted to view pornography. Never before have the accountability structures—to say nothing of the defenses which every society must build to defend the precious gift of her children—been so weak.

This plague stalks the souls of men, women and children, ravages the bonds of marriage and victimizes the most innocent among us. It obscures and destroys people’s ability to see one another as unique and beautiful expressions of God’s creation, instead darkening their vision, causing them to view others as objects to be used and manipulated. It has been excused as an outlet for free expression, supported as a business venture, and condoned as just another form of entertainment. It is not widely recognized as a threat to life and happiness. It is not often treated as a destructive addiction. It changes the way men and women treat one another in sometimes dramatic but often subtle ways. And it is not going away.

I know of this plague from my brother priests who routinely confront it in the confessional; from counselors who treat it through our various Catholic social service agencies; from Catholic school teachers, youth ministers, and religious education teachers who confront its effects in the lives of our youth; from parents who speak of the challenge of raising children with modesty in our culture; and from my involvement in the Religious Alliance Against Pornography, an interfaith coalition of religious leaders.

Yet this plague extends far beyond the boundaries of church or school. The victims of this plague are countless. Today perhaps more so than at any time previously, man finds his gift of sight and therefore his vision of God distorted by the evil of pornography.

As part of my responsibility to lead all the people in the Diocese of Arlington to the vision of God, I find it necessary once again to address the tremendous moral, social, and spiritual dangers of pornography.

**The Current Threat**

Artists have often portrayed the human body, clothed and unclothed, in various depictions and poses. While the danger of immodesty exists even with regard to works of art, the evil of pornography is greater and more insidious. Pornography depicts the body solely in an exploitative way, and pornographic images are created and viewed only for the purpose of arousing sexual impurity. Hence the production, viewing and spread of pornography is an offense against the dignity of persons, is objectively evil, and must be condemned.

*The production, viewing and spread of pornography is an offense against the dignity of persons.*

In a culture that sees pornography as a mere private weakness or even as a legitimate pleasure to be protected by law, we must repeat here the Catholic Church’s constant teaching. In simple terms, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* condemns pornography as “a grave offense” (CCC 2354).

The immorality of pornography comes, first of all, from the fact that it distorts the truth about human sexuality. “It perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other” (CCC 2354). Rather than being the expression of a married couple’s intimate union of life and love, sex is reduced to a demeaning source of entertainment and even profit for others. Pornography violates chastity also because it introduces impure thoughts into the viewer’s mind and often leads to unchaste acts, such as masturbation or adultery.

Pornography offends also against justice. “It does grave injury to the dignity of its participants (actors, vendors, the public), since each one becomes an object of base pleasure and illicit profit for others” (CCC 2354). The “participants” are used and manipulated in ways incompatible with their human dignity.

Everyone involved in the production, distribution, sale, and use of pornography cooperates and, to some degree, makes possible this debasement of others. Indeed, pornography has become a system and an industry of mutual degradation. That some may be willing participants in no way lessens the culpability of those who engage in the production and use of pornography.

Further, pornography represents a serious abuse of the means of communication, and, in that regard, is a violation of the eighth commandment. We must remember that the right to use the means of communication (i.e., freedom of speech) is not an absolute right. It must always be at the service of the common good. Civil authorities must ensure that the use of the means of communication be in accord with the moral law. To accomplish this, civil authorities “should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials” (CCC 2354).

I remind all the faithful, therefore, that the use of pornography—i.e., its manufacture, distribution, sale or viewing—is gravely sinful. Those who engage in such activity with full knowledge and complete consent commit a mortal sin. Such actions deprive them of sanctifying grace, destroy the life of Christ in their souls, and prevent them from receiving Holy Communion worthily until they have received absolution through the Sacrament of Penance.

The gravity of this sin becomes clearer when one considers the tremendous damage the use of pornography causes to society. It damages first of all the family, the basic cell of society and the Church, because it tears at the marital bond. Since it “immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world” (CCC 2354), a man’s use of pornography turns his attention and affection away from his wife. It creates in his mind unrealistic and often immoral expectations for their intimate life. He begins to approach her only as a means to his own gratification and no longer as his “suitable partner.” Priests and counselors know very well how grave a threat pornography poses to marriage and how many families have already suffered sad division due to its effects.

Pornography’s availability and intrusion injure the common good by producing a consumerist and licentious view of sexuality, particularly of women. Inculcating and guarding the precious virtue of chastity becomes increasingly difficult when pornography infects a majority of media outlets. Society’s interest in preparing young men and women for marriage also suffers when the media presents as a mercantile plaything the holy act of intimacy that is proper to the sacred bond of marriage.

Perhaps worst of all, however, is the damage that pornography does to man’s “template” for the supernatural. Our natural vision in this world is the model for supernatural vision in the next. Once we have distorted or damaged that template, how will we understand the reality? Our Lord has given us the gift of sight with the intention that we ultimately may see Him. The sinful use of this faculty both warps our understanding of it and—worse still—cripples our ability to realize its fulfillment in heaven. What man should use for receiving the true vision of God and the beauty of His creation, he uses instead to consume false images of others in pornography. How can we understand the supernatural sight God desires for us—i.e., the contemplation of God in the beatific vision—once our natural sight has been damaged and distorted?

## The Current Threat: Christians in a Secular World

Christians are intrinsically a people set apart. The reality of Baptism constitutes us as a community called into the desert, a people consecrated for relationship with the Creator of all things. Yet, like the people Israel who were called out of Egypt, members of the Church, too, find themselves inextricably tied to the same culture of death from which God has freed them.

*“In the desert the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, ‘Would that we had died at the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread!’” – Exodus 16:2-3*

It is not surprising, then, that we find ourselves assuming secular attitudes and becoming confused about the true nature of sin. This confusion becomes deadly when we use it to justify our own sinfulness, or seek to “define away” the evil nature of sins that tempt us. This is nowhere more evident than in the confusion that some Christians experience about the true nature of pornography.

Young Christians struggle to live the demands of discipleship amid the pressures of the surrounding culture. This process of integration becomes more difficult in a culture that, over the last generation, has abandoned the virtue of chastity. Spouses—especially husbands—striving to grow in the fidelity inherent in their marital vocation, encounter temptations to escape and seek false comfort in images and fantasies.

Priests and religious, having committed themselves to a chaste and celibate life, find themselves in the midst of a culture that views celibacy as an impossible and even unhealthy goal. In moments of doubt, they may reach out for the false comforts of impurity. Their failure is all the more grave because of the scandal it brings to the Church.

Single men and women are distracted by these fantasies from their most important task of discerning God’s call in their life. In moving from impure thoughts to images to actual sexual misconduct, they undermine the foundation of trust and fidelity required for future happiness.

No person living in our culture can totally separate himself or herself from the scourge of pornography. All are affected to a greater or lesser extent, even those who do not directly participate in the use of pornography. Yet if those who have given in to this vice were to answer honestly whether pornography made them happier or better persons, only the most dismissive would answer “yes.” An honest assessment reveals that the use of pornography is debilitating spiritually, socially and emotionally.

## ...What Can Be Done

Public officials have a responsibility to uphold and ennoble the standards of the communities that they serve. Protecting a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise which destroys the lives of both those depicted in pornography and those intended as audience through the excuse of protecting free speech is not service, but complicity. Public officials must work tirelessly to pass and enforce laws that contribute to a culture that respects the lives of all citizens.

This criminal enterprise known as the pornography industry is a crime against the helpless and the disaffected on whom it preys and an affront to a civilized populace. The continued toleration of this insidious toxic poison that hides itself under the guise of freedom of speech and freedom of conscience is contributing to the debasement of our culture and the victimization of our own children.

Free citizens have the right and the responsibility to form a culture that supports the life and the dignity and nobility of every person. Citizens should unite to demand laws that place reasonable restrictions on the depiction of the human body and human intimacy.

Where the pornographic mentality has invaded even mainstream media—and certainly, what is now offered on cable and even broadcast television increasingly approaches pornographic content—citizens must demand that public officials whose service is to regulate such media take immediate and effective action. Contrary to the self-serving defense of some media outlets, such actions are not censorship, but rather the demand for an end to the exploitation of persons and the degradation of public morality.

### Counsel for all Christians

*“Be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine like lights in the world.” – Philippians 2:15*

Christians should not be surprised to find themselves part of a culture that, in many ways, is contrary to the Gospel and repellent to Christian virtue. It was the same in the time of Saint Paul, and in some sense, for every generation of believers. But Christians of every generation are called to live in conformity with the truth of Jesus Christ and to stand apart from those aspects of culture that are contrary to this truth. A most effective way in which believers can combat the plague of pornography is by the witness of their lives.

*Christians...are called to live in conformity with the truth of Jesus Christ.*

Culture is formed by the choices of free people. It is important that we choose morally uplifting and life-affirming pursuits that contribute to the common good and the flourishing of all persons. Within one’s capabilities, each person should make every effort to contribute healthy and chaste entertainments that can be shared by all. In the fields of art, literature and music, we must never compromise our own Christian dignity to suit the expectations of a decadent culture.

Form close bonds of Christian friendship in order to receive mutual support and affirmation. When appropriate, use these friendships to explore and shape the culture around you. It is in these bonds of friendship and family that authentic human intimacy can in fact be found.

### What Can Be Done

Christians today live in an age unprecedented for the ability to communicate and find information. Through television, film, wireless communication and the Internet, we find ourselves with almost unlimited information at our fingertips at any time of the day or night.

Sadly, a great amount of the information available on the Internet is pornographic in nature. Some will find this instant access to impure images a temptation difficult to overcome. Do not justify the presence of a snake in the home for the benefits it may bring. We must remember our moral obligation not to place ourselves knowingly or deliberately in the occasion of sin.

The inconvenience of losing instant access to information will be far outweighed by the ability to live an integrated and pure life. The best defense against pornography is to stop it before it starts—even if that involves sacrificing some otherwise neutral technology use.

But if you already have or are using pornography, your spiritual growth will be impossible without an honest admission of guilt and reconciliation. All Christians should avail themselves of the grace of the Sacrament of Penance and make this sacrament of mercy the cornerstone of the struggle against pornography.

Finally, never underestimate the efficacy of Christian prayer. Pray for the victims of pornography, that their precious human dignity may be healed and restored. Offer concrete acts of penance through spiritual works and fasting for those who manipulate others in this

crime of pornography, and who share in the complicity of its distribution. Through these acts of reparation, offer to God an acceptable sacrifice pleasing in His sight.

### Counsel for Young People

*“Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.” – 1 Timothy 4:12*

I turn with particular concern to my young brothers and sisters in Christ. I fear that the full burden of our culture’s surrender to pornography will fall on your shoulders, both now and in years to come. Not only have you been targeted by this criminal enterprise as a source of financial gain, but you also have to endure the impoverished notion of intimacy that results from a culture that has confused love with self-gratification. Know first that God has destined you for a true and fully human love that finds its center not in manipulating others but in sharing and flourishing in a communion with your beloved.

Many in society have accepted the false expectation that youth cannot control their natural desires and practice the virtue of chaste intimacy. This belief—that it is impractical or even unnatural to avoid impurity and the indulgence in pornographic fantasy—is a lie and far from the mind of the Church. The acceptance of this lie of immaturity becomes the excuse for ignoring the vital importance of strengthening the virtues of modesty and chastity so central to your future happiness.

The growth of intimacy that is at the heart of the experience of youth begins in the family. Here, in the mystery of human love and sacrifice, you first begin to explore the joy of intimacy and trust. In the sacred community of the family, you learn that your worth is not dependent upon your usefulness or your success, but upon the fact that you are valued as an irreplaceable and sacred person. It is also in this sacred community of the family that forgiveness, so central in our struggles against sin, is learned and first practiced.

Remember always your important role in the community of your family. Respect your parents’ God-given role in guiding your life. Cooperate in their efforts to ensure your safety and guide your decisions. This is most important in your decisions to use various media and take part in recreational activities.

As you develop a healthy sense of privacy, do not be misled into embracing secrecy. Privacy is the healthy and necessary understanding that parts of your experience—your thoughts, dreams and aspirations—are uniquely your own and so should be shared only when you decide to share in intimacy. Secrecy, however, is the enemy of intimacy and does violence against the bonds of family. Secrecy is a rejection of love.

Look to your brothers and sisters and remember your responsibility towards them. If they are older, encourage them with your praise of their success. Remind them that you wish to imitate them in their virtue. If they are younger, assist your brothers and sisters, using the experience you have gained in your own struggles.

*“Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you.” – 1 Peter 3:15*

Growing in intimacy does not end with the family. For youth, the development of the bonds of intimate friendship marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adult life. The forming of these friendships exerts a great desire for acceptance and belonging. Often described as “peer pressure,” these expectations of friends are not only a source of temptation to experiment with destructive behavior, but also an opportunity to share things of true and lasting value. Resist giving in to the sharing of impure images from a desire to gain such acceptance. Reject the easy path of impure talk, immodest dress and pornographic entertainment. Be ready to explain to your friends why you have chosen to avoid this evil. Offer instead the example of self-mastery.

Just as the self-mastery displayed in athletics, music, and academics draws natural admiration from peers, so too will self-mastery in purity draw admiration from friends who are facing the same uncertainties and temptations.

Any human struggle, including the struggle for purity and modesty, comes with the possibility of failure. It is often through failure and the persistence to succeed that mastery is achieved.

You must not become disheartened if you should succumb to the temptations that surround you. Be persistent in your goal and turn calmly from your temporary defeat. Young people have a great affinity for the Sacrament of Penance. Because of your innate understanding of the tragedy of failure, young people naturally long for a means of returning to a state of grace. Take advantage of the opportunity of reconciliation. Participate in the Sacrament of Penance regularly.

Remember that God has created you for perfect intimacy with Himself. Your struggle against sin—whether involving pornography or other temptations of life—is actually your preparation for this true intimacy for which your loving Father has created you. In whatever vocation to which the Lord invites you, your successful battle against impurity will contribute to the true happiness that will be found in the intimacy of that call.

Feel always confident to turn for assistance in these struggles to beloved Saint Joseph, the true spiritual father of us all: O loving father Saint Joseph who watched over and protected the Infant Jesus as He grew in grace and wisdom, watch over me, my family and my friends as we struggle to lead a life of love and friendship.

**Counsel for Married and Engaged Couples**

*“So (also) husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.” – Ephesians 5:28-30*

The true guardian and caretaker of the unique dignity of human persons is the family, and most particularly husbands and wives, who are custodians of the sacredness of life. Pornography not only poses a danger for the promise of faithfulness that is the fundamental element of the marriage bond, but also threatens the moral and sexual development of children whose nurturance is entrusted to the watchful care of parents. Husbands and wives are the most immediate and direct combatants in the struggle against pornography.

While husbands and wives share equal dignity as persons, they do not share temptations equally—especially the temptations associated with the scourge of pornography. It must be admitted that the use of pornography is largely, although certainly not exclusively, associated with males. If a marriage begins to be damaged by pornography, the husband will most likely introduce it.

Husbands, be aware that your solemn promise of faithfulness, which is the foundation of the formation of your family, is damaged by any use of pornography. Strive to bring honor to the promise you made at the beginning of your married life. The times where intimacy is difficult are opportunities to practice the sacrificial love of a spouse that only your noble vocation illustrates most perfectly.

**What Can Be Done**

Seeking comfort in the illusion of pornography will incrementally corrupt your understanding of self, your perception of your beloved wife, and the model you present to your children. It is futile to believe that this secret preoccupation can be contained and isolated from family life. In



small ways, the self-centeredness and disrespect of self and others, which lie at the heart of this vice, will become manifest within your relationships with your family.

Wives who find that their husbands have entered into a sinful attraction to pornographic images or stories must be loving and forgiving, but also stern in calling the spouse to return to his true manly vocation of marriage. Pornography means, in essence, that your husband is cheating on you. This betrayal of a spouse over a mere illusion is a bitter experience, yet one whose most sure antidote is love, support and counsel.

The field of psychological counseling, when in keeping with the proper understanding of the human person and natural law, can also be of great assistance. Many have found themselves incapable of struggling against impurity alone, and that the assistance of a counselor or a therapist has made a sizable (sometimes decided) difference.

Husbands and wives must practice constant vigilance to ensure that the plague of pornography does not enter into the lives of their children. It is the duty of both parents, but in a special way the father, to protect your children from pornography. This vigilance begins with a prudential control of media available in the home. Encourage the use of uplifting and positive magazines, films and books. When exercising parental controls over media, provide children with understandable standards and moral reasons for recommending and rejecting media content.

Always be clear and consistent when explaining these standards and demonstrate their importance by accepting the same standards for yourself.

Insist on strict and clear controls on any child's use of the Internet. Internet use in the home should always take place in family areas. Children, even older children, should not be provided Internet access in the privacy of their rooms.

Technology controls on both computers and television should be a routine part of family media use.

Most importantly, husbands and wives provide the clearest and surest teaching of chastity through the love, devotion and self-sacrifice they display in their relationship one to the other.

Recall always that the Lord has entrusted to you by your very life together the perfect means to bring children to a true and mature understanding of human intimacy.

Entrust each other and your children always to the care of the perfect spouse, Saint Joseph:

O most provident guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ. Most beloved father, dispel the evil of impurity and sin. Our most mighty protector, graciously assist us from heaven in our struggle with the powers of darkness. And just as you once saved the Child Jesus from mortal danger, so now defend this family from the snares of her enemies and from all adversity. Shield each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your help, we may be able to live a virtuous life, to die a holy death, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

### **Takeaway**

When a married person uses pornography, it corrupts the marriage and will harm the children.

### **Practice**

Put strict limits on your children's Internet, tablet, or smartphone use and consider ways to "unplug" for the good of your family life. Re-examine your own use of technology and what you are allowing into your home.



## Plan of Life

Sins against purity are discouraging and can lead to great frustration and self-hatred. You may feel a sense of helplessness and that these sins are impossible to overcome. But with God you need never despair. As much as you want to overcome this sin, you can be sure that your Father in Heaven desires this even more than you do.

### You will win.

God knows you and all your failings. He loves you and wants you to be free. You only need to:

- Hope in God's help.
- Be open to His grace.
- Have a plan of life.
- Persevere.

The following suggested **Plan of Life** is intended to help men to draw closer to Jesus Christ and His Church. Many of these suggestions can also be found in Bishop Loverde's letter on the New Evangelization, *Go Forth with Hearts on Fire*. Such a plan will aid a man in defeating lust while it is still a distant threat.

These are suggestions—a beginning, rather than a law written in stone. Remember that these are not mere “things to accomplish” but rather encounters with our loving Father.

## Daily Practices

### 1. Morning Offering

As soon as you rise in the morning, make some kind of offering of the day to the Lord. A traditional offering is:

*O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.*

### 2. Scripture Reading / Spiritual Reading

Take about 20 minutes, divided between Scripture (the Gospel reading from daily Mass is a good place to start) and some other spiritual reading. It is good to do this at the beginning of the day. If a word or phrase stands out, write it down, keep it in your pocket, and read it throughout the day.

### 3. Meditation Time / Mental Prayer

Make a point to set aside some time in silence to be with the Lord. You can use what you read in Scripture or in your spiritual reading as a source for your meditation. Also take this time to speak to God about your life and to ask for His help and strength. If possible, do this in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament or before an image of Our Lord such as a Crucifix or picture of the Sacred Heart.

Here are some suggestions for prayers to be said at the beginning and end of your meditation time:

*(Opening) My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that You are here, that You see me and that You hear me. I adore You with profound reverence, I ask for Your pardon for my sins, and the grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. Immaculate Mary, Saint Joseph, Guardian Angel, intercede for me.*

*(Closing) I thank you, my God, for the good resolutions, affections, and inspirations which You have given to me in this time of prayer. I ask Your help to put them into effect. Immaculate Mary, Saint Joseph, Guardian Angel, intercede for me.*

#### 4. The Rosary

This can be prayed during some quiet time, during your commute, or on a walk. It is great to pray the rosary as a couple or as a family too.

#### 5. Practice of the Presence of God

Make a habit throughout the day of turning your eyes toward God. You can fix certain times of the day or identify places to trigger these prayers. You might set up a calendar reminder on your computer at work, or have a small holy image on your desk to remind you. The idea here is recognizing that God is always with us and we need only take note of His Presence through short prayers throughout the day. Be creative with this.

#### 6. Prayer Before Bed

Make a brief examination of conscience followed by an Act of Contrition or some other short prayer. Lust is parasitical on other emotions and moods. It generally does not gain power over us by itself but piggybacks on negative situations. Ask the help of the Holy Spirit to guide you:

- What were the circumstances prior to the fall into sin?
- What was your mood?
- Were you angry, frustrated, lonely or sad?
- How did you deal with these circumstances or feelings?

Make an Act of Entrustment to God, such as this: *My Lord and my God, into Your hands I abandon the past, the present, and the future, what is small and what is great, what amounts to little and what amounts to a lot, things temporal and things eternal.*

#### Weekly, Monthly, and Other Practices

- **Mass** on Sundays and Holy Days, more often if you can.
- Frequent **visits to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament**, in a church or chapel, even if only for a few minutes.
- Frequent **confession**, at least once a month. Having a regular confessor can be a great help.
- **Spiritual direction**. If you do not have a spiritual director and are seeking advice on what to look for, speak with your Pastor or other parish priest.
- A **silent retreat** once a year, for a day, weekend or even longer. There are many retreat centers offering private or directed retreats, and many monasteries have guest houses.
- **Pilgrimages** to holy sites, even locally. There are a number of beautiful shrines and other holy places within an easy drive of our own diocese. If you are able, consider a larger pilgrimage to Rome, the Holy Land, or some other place at least once in your lifetime.
- To remind you to be prayerful, tape a **holy image** to or near your computer monitor or set religious art as your wallpaper.
- **Install filters or a monitoring system** on your computer. Use your computer in public areas of the home with your door always open.

- **Use the Internet with purpose.** Say a prayer as you go onto the Internet and throughout your use. Know what you want, get it as quickly as possible, and log off.

- When you are experiencing temptation, say **short prayers** multiple times. Parts of the Our Father and Hail Mary are helpful as well as invocations of Jesus, Mary, Joseph or other saints and angels. An example of an invocation would be, “Jesus, save me” or “Mary, help me.”

### **Bishop Paul S. Loverde**

Bishop Loverde was ordained a priest on December 18, 1965, and a Bishop in 1988. In 1999, he was appointed by Pope John Paul II as the third Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, which encompasses twenty-one counties and seven independent cities in the northern tier of Virginia.

A native of Pawcatuck, Connecticut, Bishop Loverde  
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# WHY IS CONTRACEPTION WRONG?

Reason, nature and Scripture all provide solid evidence that contraception is wrong. In addition it leads to a host of harmful effects for its users and for the world. (We speak mainly of contraception by couples united in lawful marriage. Any use of sexuality outside of this context is already a misuse and a serious wrong.)

**Procreation Is the Very Purpose of Sex**

The first, and foundational, set of reasons involves the very nature of sexuality, and its purpose. When we want to find the purpose of anything we need to ask, “What does this object or activity make possible that nothing else does?” In the case of sexuality we notice that the exercise of it by a man and a woman acting together can result in the generation of another human being. Nothing else in nature does that. We can confidently conclude, therefore, that the very purpose of sexuality involves procreation.

We can go a bit further and ask, “Why would God, the Designer of human nature, give this capability to us humans?” It’s not that just to give us physical pleasure or even to have more people on earth. What God does want is more people to live with Him in heaven, and we must go through a life on earth in order to get there.

Contraception obviously prevents the generation of another human being who could live forever with God in heaven.

When a child is conceived God is the one who produces the immortal soul of the new human being. If a man and a woman take the pleasure of the action but frustrate the will and the purpose of God by preventing Him from exercising His role, what they do is directly insulting to God.

Contraception has a counterpart in the area of food. Some people have a disorder called bulimia, by which they are so obsessed with the pleasure of eating that they deliberately regurgitate in order to consume immediately another meal.

**A Sacred Act**

God is present in every moment of our lives, but there are certain moments when His presence is more evident than others, such as being present at the death of someone we love or, for a Catholic, receiving Christ Himself in the Holy Eucharist. The conception of a new human being, destined to live for all eternity, is also such a sacred moment and the act that leads to producing that soul is a truly sacred act. Over and above its pleasure-giving aspect couples need to be aware of the likelihood of God’s presence and therefore treat the action, their partner in the action and the child that results from the action with a sense of that sacredness. (Also, one’s own parents, who gave life to us.) Every child is a gift from God, who is entrusting them with the care of the child who is His.

**The Unitive Aspect of the Purpose**

Besides the production of a child, sexuality has net another natural effect, that of bonding the man and woman to each other, an effect that constitutes a second purpose of the faculty, equal in importance to the first. This should be more than a psychological binding; it should consist of a total giving of each partner to the other, including the giving of the sexual part of their nature, and also their mutual giving on a spiritual basis. This unitive effect augments the procreative purpose of sexuality since the couple’s fidelity to each other is needed for the upbringing of the children God entrusts to them and it also helps them to help each other to salvation.

When the procreative effect is deliberately prevented the unitive effect is endangered since sexual pleasure can begin to take the place of love for the other person as the motivation for the action.

**Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition**

God’s position on procreation and offenses against it are found explicitly in Scripture. The very first chapter of Sacred Scripture tells us, “Male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. . .’” (Gen 1:27-28)

Later, God slew Onan for spilling his seed rather than have a child with his brother’s widow. (Gen 38: 9-10).

Critics try to argue that Onan’s offense was that of refusing to have children by the wife of his deceased brother, but the penalty for that is not death (Deut 25: 5-10) and Onan’s brother, Shelah, was not put to death even though he did not marry the widow either. (Gen 38:11-14)

Contraception was held to be wrong in the earliest moral pronouncement of the Church, the *Didache* (late 1st to mid 2nd cent). Fathers of the Church through the years, including Augustine and Aquinas, concur.

Twentieth-century popes Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII and John Paul II, all agree, as did Vatican Council II.

**Predictions by Pope Paul VI**

Pope Paul VI in 1968 issued the encyclical *Humanae Vitae (Of Human Life)*, in which he repeated the teaching of the Catholic Church through the centuries that contraception is sinful. In this encyclical Pope Paul also predicted a series of harmful consequences that would follow from the widespread practice of contraception. While many people in the 1960's were arguing that contraception would result in happier marriages, less adultery, fewer divorces and fewer abortions, Pope Paul said that exactly the opposite would be the case. The experience of the world since 1968 has proven him to be correct.

Adultery is more common now because there is less fear of its resulting in an illegitimate child. The lessening of love for one’s spouse has led to an increase in divorce, leaving single mothers with lowered income and children more exposed to poverty, poorer education, delinquency and later crime. And more people resort to abortion when contraception fails in its intended purpose.

The world of the 1960's also predicted that contraception would enable women to be liberated from the burdens of pregnancy and children. What has happened, however, is that men have come to regard women as instruments for sexual pleasure without having to deal with the consequences, just as Pope Paul predicted. So women are losers rather than gainers from contraception.

Raising a family is the normal vocation for most lay people, both men and women, and the means by which they can attain heaven. It is more valuable to them than a high-powered career or a high-paying position.

**Governments and Population**

Paul VI also predicted that governments would force contraception on couples in order to limit a nation’s population. This, too, has occurred, most notably in China, where the government

has gone even further, forcing women to undergo abortions if they exceeded the one-child policy that was in effect there for many years, resulting in millions of children growing up without brothers or sisters, aunts or uncles, nieces or nephews or cousins. This actually destroys the family as the basic building block of society.

Contraception is often promoted because of claims that the world is over-populated. On a global basis that is not the case since food is sufficient but its distribution is faulty, often due to the corruption of government officials. For individual countries where resources may not be sufficient the teaching of the Catholic Church (CCC 2372) is that “it is legitimate for [the state] to intervene to orient the demography of the population.

This can be done by means of objective and respectful information, but certainly not by authoritarian, coercive measures.”

**Medical, Economic, Environmental Effects**

Yet another set of harmful effects were not explicitly predicted by Pope Paul VI. Some of these affect the couples practicing contraception; others affect society as a whole.

Even when birth prevention measures prevent conception, they do not necessarily prevent sexually transmitted infections, about a dozen different varieties of these, including the AIDS virus. And the side effects of the chemical methods, such as the pill, can result in yet other medical problems, including an increased probability of breast cancer, denials by the media notwithstanding.

A very important sociological and economic problem flows from a decreased percentage of young people in the total population. Life expectancy has been increasing due to medical advances, thereby generating an increase in health care expenses and pensions, but this has not been matched by a corresponding increase in the numbers of people entering the work force in the United States and many other Western countries.

Social Security and Medicare are both forecasting the depletion of their funds in a few years. Although other factors are also operative, contraception and abortion play a significant part.

There is also the matter of the environment. Fresh water fish in western states are rapidly dying off, to the degree that fishermen for Columbia River salmon fear the actual extinction of the species that is their primary source of income. Scientists analyzing the small number of fish that remain find an overwhelming percentage of females plus a few other fish possessing a combination of male and female characteristics, not at all the material for generating a normal population.

What is the cause? Hormones in the urine of women who use the contraceptive pill have become part of the runoff into sewage systems and into streams and rivers, causing the fish there to be overwhelmingly female.

Since these fish are then eaten by humans, it is not inconceivable that it could cause a lowering of virility in the male population in countries such as the United States, where use of the contraceptive pill is common.

**What the Church Does Not Teach**

The opposition of the Catholic Church to contraception is not based primarily upon the harmful effects, either those predicted by Pope Paul VI or those he did not foresee, but rather upon the moral issue, the wrongness of the action itself. Nevertheless, even people who accept neither the authority nor the arguments of the Catholic Church on the moral issue should make

themselves aware that contraception can be medically harmful to themselves and that its widespread practice is doing economic and environmental harm.

Nor is the Catholic Church saying that these harmful effects are the result of God’s decision to punish those who disobey Him. But every action in the world of nature has its natural effects; for contraception, these effects are harmful.

**What is Meant, and for Whom**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (paragraph 2366) quotes Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* (14), “‘every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible’ is intrinsically evil.”

Couples may not claim that conscience allows them to *decide* in favor of contraception. Conscience is an activity that seeks to *discover the truth* regarding the morality of an action and must be formed in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christ and His Church.

All forms of contraception are wrong:

- preventing the delivery of sperm or ovum, as by sterilization or the action of the pill, which makes the woman’s body appear to be already pregnant so it will not deliver another egg;
- withdrawal before the sex act is complete;
- physical barriers (such as condoms or diaphragms), which prevent the contact of sperm and egg;
- chemicals or drugs, which prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus or receiving the nourishment needed to grow. (This latter method, such as the morning-after pill, is actually abortion, since a fertilized egg is already a human being.)

This teaching is directed not just to Catholics. While there are Church precepts that apply only to her own members (such as the requirement to participate in the Mass on Sunday), any requirements promulgated by the Church’s Magisterium that flow from human nature itself are applicable to the entire human race. The use of sexuality applies to every human being, and actions that frustrate its natural purpose are evil in themselves.

**Natural Family Planning, and Limits on Its Use**

In cases where another pregnancy would cause truly serious hardship, such as for medical or financial reasons, couples may resort to Natural Family Planning, by which they limit their use of sex to times when conception is unlikely, as reliably determined from changes in the woman’s body.

NFP has virtually no costs and no harmful side-effects and has been found to increase couples’ love for each other by bringing them closer due to the communication needed for it. It has been promoted by Mother Teresa’s sisters in Calcutta.

But the serious reasons needed to justify it would not include a mere desire to delay starting a family or even to space the arrival of children, which can normally be accomplished naturally by breast-feeding. The temporary abstention must be agreed to by both parties and must not be used if it is an occasion of sin for either of them.

In fact, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2368) warns couples contemplating the use of Natural Family Planning, “It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by

selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood.” Moreover they should make sure their behavior “does not depend on sincere intention and evaluation of motives alone; but it must be determined by objective criteria . . . drawn from the nature of the person and his acts, criteria that respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love.” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 51) For such a decision they should consult a trusted spiritually oriented priest advisor.

### Justification for Natural Family Planning

How can Natural Family Planning be justified when contraception is intrinsically wrong? In using NFP the couple are abstaining at times and performing normal marriage acts at other times.

- Abstaining from an act one is not required to perform is morally allowable.
- When engaging in marital acts the couple is not doing anything *in the performance of the act itself* that renders conception impossible, but are using the action as nature designed it.
- The couple is always allowed to have sex during the woman’s infertile period.
- Restricting their sexual activity to her period of normal infertility can be justified only if the couple are truly open to having children but doing so would involve serious consequences (medical, financial or psychological) that are objectively well founded and not merely due to the wishes of the couple. Even though Natural Family Planning prevents the procreative purpose of the marital act nevertheless, when legitimately used, it generally produces a strengthening of the unitive effect due to the close communication needed.

In addition, NFP does not bring about the harmful effects that stem from contraception.

- For those who use NFP properly there is no resorting to adultery, divorce or abortion.
- Husbands are not simply using their wives as instruments for sexual pleasure any time they want.
- NFP does not produce either the medical or the environmental side effects that follow from the various methods of contraception.
- NFP is not normally justified in a large enough number of cases to allow the harmful economic effect of lowering a nation’s birth rate.

In short, contraception is fundamentally wrong because of the nature of the act itself while NFP is a neutral action, neither good nor bad, and therefore permissible, but can be rendered bad due to improper intention.

John Paul II wrote in *Familiaris Consortio* (32) that the two involve “irreconcilable conflicts of the human person and of human sexuality.”

Catholic marriage involves a general obligation to raise a numerous family (but not ignoring altogether the financial, medical and other capabilities of the couple).

But this family is not just an obligation; it’s also a great advantage. Human life is sacred, children are gifts from God, and the couple’s procreative action is collaboration with God, Who is the author of human life. Such gifts and offers for collaboration must not be declined casually. Each child is a gift, regardless of its physical or mental condition, its chances for worldly success or its effect on the opportunities for children already born.

**Editor’s Note: A warning is necessary here about the overuse and misuse of NFP in modern times. Traditional Catholics have rightly taken a stance that questions the legitimacy of the excessive modern-day promotion of NFP in the Conciliar Church which tends to encourage overuse of NFP by couples and underplays the definition of “grave hardship”. For more information, see the below articles which contain much valuable and essential information:**

**NFP: An Unhappy Compromise:**

<http://sspx.org/en/nfp-unhappy-compromise>



**A Danger to Marital Love and Fidelity: NFP**

<http://sspx.org/en/danger-marital-love-and-fidelity-nfp>

**The Problem of Natural Family Planning:**

<http://sspx.org/en/news-events/news/problem-natural-family-planning-3180>

### **Sacrifice and the Will of God**

Living as a Catholic involves seeking to do the will of God in every aspect of our life, and this is just as true in marriage as in any other part of life. Carrying out the will of God often involves sacrifice, giving up what we would wish to do, for the sake of our children, our partner in marriage, or God Himself.

Catholic marriage requires accepting the difficulties God sends us and trusting Him to help us show our love for Him by making use of those difficulties. He does expect us, of course, to use the intellect He has given us to discover the best course of action needed to serve Him, and then make use of His grace to do it.

When a couple's financial situation would make it appear difficult, but not overwhelmingly so, to have another child, this may be the indicator that God wants them to trust Him to give them the means to carry out His will by having the child, regarding it as God's gift to them and raising it to mature life in Him and for Him.

### **Living Life's Purpose through Marriage**

Catholic teaching regarding sexuality and marriage is totally oriented toward the purpose of life, the gaining of eternal life in heaven. The sacrament of marriage is designed to help husband and wife to help each other in attaining that purpose, and to raise whatever children God sends them so the children can then accomplish the same purpose in *their* lives. Married life involves many difficulties and the sacrament itself, along with Reconciliation and the Eucharist, provides the graces needed to succeed.

People not yet married must conduct their lives in a way that can be a suitable preparation for marriage, avoiding any active use of sexuality and the occasions for it, such as pornography.

Sexuality in Catholic marriage is not simply a case of refusing to practice contraception. It's a deeper concept, stressing the positive use of sexuality for the procreation and rearing of families.

**Web Site: [www.catholicevidence.org](http://www.catholicevidence.org)**

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## TO SAFEGUARD YOUR PURITY

With the grace of God, the virtue of purity is obtained by vigilance and the formation of good habits.

To safeguard our purity is part and parcel of learning self-control. All means that can strengthen the will are to be encouraged, whether natural or supernatural, e.g. avoiding bad company, praying. Anything that weakens the will is to be avoided.

Countless souls down the ages have preserved and protected  
THIS NOBLE VIRTUE by the following means:

1. Receive Holy Communion often with great devotion and reverence.
2. Go to Confession regularly, at least once a month but if possible every two weeks or even weekly.
3. Have a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, Mary Immaculate. Say your three Hail Mary's morning and night. In temptation, call earnestly on Our Divine Lord, Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph. Imitate Our Lady's modesty in dress, speech and behavior.
4. Avoid people whose conduct offends purity and whose conversation is impure (off-color stories, double-meaning jokes, etc.). Avoid suggestive comics, magazines, books and especially avoid bad television, films and videos.
5. Much modern pop music is designed to demoralize by rousing the passions through its beat and suggestive words. Avoid this along with all improper dancing.
6. Always remember that intemperate use of alcohol, and of course drugs, is certainly a near occasion of sins of impurity.
7. Develop various interests for your spare time, such as ... good reading, art, painting, learn a musical instrument, a useful hobby, gardening, etc.
8. Pray to the Patrons of Purity - Saint Joseph, Saint Dominic Savio, Saint Maria Goretti, your Guardian Angel and others.

# Moral Theology Pre-Vatican II

<https://archive.org/stream/moraltheologyaco35354gut/pg35354.txt>

Moral Theology: A Complete Course Based on St. Thomas Aquinas and the Best Modern Authorities

Author: John A. McHugh, Charles J. Callan 1958

2492. The Sin of Impurity.--This sin, which is also known as lust, is an inordinate desire of sexual pleasure.

(a) Its object is sexual pleasure, that is, the sense of physical enjoyment in the bodily organs or of psychical satisfaction in the lower appetites of the soul derived from acts related to generation.

Hence, we should distinguish impurity from sensuality (which is an inordinate attachment to esthetic pleasure or other higher sense-pleasure), from luxury (which is an excessive desire of health and comfort), and from the vice called curiosity (which is an over-fondness for intellectual delights, see 2461). But it should be noted that sensual pleasure easily leads to venereal delight, and that intellectual curiosity about sex matters is dangerous, and hence this sensuality and curiosity may be, and frequently are, a temptation to impurity (see below on Temptations to Impurity).

(b) Impurity is in desire, for the passions in themselves are indifferent (see 121), and they become sinful only when their abuse is consented to by the will.

(c) Impurity is inordinate; that is, it takes pleasure against the dictate of reason. This happens when sexual gratifications are indulged by the unmarried or by the married in unnatural ways. It is a perversion and a sin to cheat the stomach in order to gratify the palate, because God willed that the pleasure of eating should serve the nourishment of the body, or, as the proverb has it, because man does not live to eat, but eats to live. Now, sex pleasure has been ordained by God as an inducement to perform an act which has for its purpose the propagation and education of children, duties that cannot be rightly attended to except in the married state. Hence, those who seek venereal pleasure outside of matrimony, or outside the way intended by nature, act unreasonably, for they sacrifice the end for the means. Instinct guides the animal aright in these matters, but man is a nobler creature and must guide himself by religion and reason.

2493. Kinds of Impurity.--(a) Impurity is consummated when the act is continued to its natural conclusion and complete venereal satisfaction is had. This occurs in semination, which is the termination of the process set up by the impure thought and desire and the realization of its full pleasure. Semination occurs either in the process of coition, or in extracoital issues known as "pollution." Equivalent to semination, morally speaking, are other emissions or secretions that accompany complete or almost complete gratification, but in which the fluid is not prolific (e.g., the urethral emissions in boys who have not attained puberty or in eunuchs, the vaginal flow in women, urethral distillations). Consummated impurity is either natural (that is, suitable for reproduction, the end intended by nature), as in fornication or adultery, or unnatural (that is, not suited for reproduction), as in sodomy or pollution.

(b) Impurity is non-consummated when not carried to its natural conclusion of complete satisfaction and semination. There are two classes of the non-consummated sins, namely, the internal (as in thoughts and desires) and the external or lewdness (as in words, looks, kisses). This happens without carnal commotion (e.g., when a frigid old man thinks with mental pleasure only on the wild deeds of his youth), or with carnal commotion, that is, with an excitement and stimulation in the genital organs that prepares the way for semination.

2494. Gravity of the Sin of Impurity.--(a) Impurity is a mortal sin, because it is a disorder that affects a good of the highest importance (viz, the propagation of the race), and brings in its train public and private, moral and physical, evils of the most serious kind. Man has no more right to degrade his body by lust than he has to kill it by suicide, for God is the absolute Lord over the body and He severely forbids impurity of every kind. Those who do the works of the flesh, whether according to nature (e.g., fornicators and adulterers) or against nature (e.g., sodomites) or by unconsummated sin (e.g., the unclean, the impure), shall not obtain the kingdom of God (Gal., v. 19; I Cor., vi. 9 sqq.), nor have any inheritance with Christ (Eph., v. 5).

(b) Impurity is not the worst of sins, because sins against God (e.g., hatred of God, sacrilege) are more heinous than sins against created goods, and sins of malice are more inexcusable than sins of passion or frailty. But carnal sins are peculiarly disgraceful on account of their animality (see 2464 b, 224), and in a Christian they are a kind of profanation, since his body has been given to Christ in Baptism and the other Sacraments (I Cor., vi. 11-19).

(c) Impurity is one of the seven capital vices. The capital sins have a preeminence in evil, as the cardinal virtues have a superiority in good. The preeminence in evil is due, first, to some special attractiveness of a vice that makes it end for the commission of other sins, which are used as means to it or are incurred for its sake; or, secondly, to a power and influence that is so strong as to hurry those under its sway into various kinds of sin. Now, impurity is a moral disease that ravages every part of the soul, its deadly effects appearing in the reason, the will and external speech; for the more one subjects oneself to the dominion of passion, the less fitted does one become for the higher and nobler things of life; and the more ignoble the inner life, the more vulgar, cheap and degrading will be the conversation.

Hence, the Fathers trace back to impurity the following sins of imprudence in the mind: wrong apprehension, about the end or purpose of life, and precipitancy in deliberation, thoughtlessness in decision, inconstancy in direction, in reference to the means to the end (see 1693 sqq.). They also trace to impurity the following sins in the will: as to the end, voluptuarism (which subordinates all to fleshly pleasure) and hatred of God (which abhors the Supreme Lawgiver who forbids and punishes lust); as to the means, love of the present and horror of the future life (since the carnal man revels in bodily pleasures and dreads the thought of death and judgment). Finally, they trace the following sins of the tongue to the vice of impurity: the subject of the lewd man's talk is filthy, for out of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matt., xii. 34), the expression itself is foolish, since passion clouds his mind, the origin of his talk is emptiness of mind which shows itself in frivolous words, and his purpose is unsuitable amusement, which leads to farcical or vulgar jokes.

2495. Evil Fruits of Impurity.--In addition to these moral consequences, impurity is also prolific of many other evil fruits.

(a) Thus, for the sinner himself it is like a cruel goad that constantly annoys him and takes away his peace (St. Ambrose), like a sword that kills the nobler instincts (St. Gregory the Great), like a descent from human dignity to a condition below the beasts (St. Eusebius of Caesarea).

(b) For society it is disastrous in many ways, since it propagates dread mental and physical diseases, disrupts the peace of families, brings disgrace and destitution on innocent children, eats away fortunes and leads up to innumerable crimes of injustice and violence.

2496. Is Impurity Ever a Venial Sin?--(a) By reason of the imperfection of the act, impurity is venial when there is no sufficient deliberation or consent. Invincible ignorance in reference to the sixth commandment itself sometimes happens, especially in reference to internal sins of thought, to external sins of pollution if the person is young, and to other external sins when there is some complication of circumstances (e.g., kissing and other intimacy by engaged persons, onanism when married persons are poor or the woman sickly); and more frequently there is invincible ignorance about details of the sixth commandment (e.g., about the precise theological or moral malice of what is known to be sinful).

(b) By reason of the matter, impurity according to the common teaching is always mortal if directly willed, but sometimes venial if only indirectly willed. Impurity is directly willed when one posits an act intending to obtain from it unlawful venereal delectation, or perceives that such delectation is already present and consents to it. No matter how brief this voluntary assent, no matter how slight the commotion of the animal nature, no matter how far from the consummated is the impure act in question, there is always a serious injury done to a great good or at least (exception is made for the case of married persons) the proximate danger of such injury, and hence mortal sin (see 260). That even slight yielding to impurity is a serious peril is the teaching of Scripture (which declares that lust has killed even the strongest, Prov., vii. 26), of the Church (which condemns the opinion that libidinous kisses are not dangerous, see Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, n. 1140), of theology (which reminds us that by original sin reason has been darkened, the will enfeebled and the passions strengthened), and of experience (which shows that those who expose themselves to passion's flame will be burnt). A small spark of fire is not trivial in the vicinity of a powder magazine, a minute flaw in a machine is not unimportant if it may bring on disaster, a first step is not safe if it is made on a slippery downward declivity.

(c) Impurity is indirectly willed when deliberately and without sufficient reason one posits an act which is not venereal pleasure (whether the act be good, such as a prayer made with great sensible fervor, or bad, such as gluttony, or indifferent, such as reading a book, looking at a picture, taking a bath), but which produces foreseen venereal pleasure (consummated or non-consummated) that one neither intends nor directly consents to. Impurity thus indirectly willed is sinful, because the pleasure is foreseen and permitted without sufficient reason (see 102), or in other words because one exposes oneself to danger of internal defilement (consent), or external pollution without justification (see 260). Indirect impurity is mortal when there is proximate danger of grave sin in the act done, that is, when the posited act *\_per se\_* or from its nature strongly incites the agent to sexual passion, as when one gazes long and fixedly at obscene pictures, knowing that always or nearly always this arouses impure emotions. The sin is venial when there is only remote danger of grave sin. This happens when the posited act is not of a venereal kind (an unnecessary conversation on indifferent topics) or is only mildly exciting (e.g., a passing glance at an obscene object), or when the agent himself is not greatly affected by it (e.g., when an old man, or one who is of very cold disposition, or an artist whose only thought is the esthetic excellence, carefully studies a picture of the nude).

2497. Temptations to Impurity.--Before treating the various kinds of impurity, we shall speak briefly of temptations that occasion this sin and of the duties of the person tempted.

(a) External temptation comes from the devil or the world, and the duty of struggling against it has been treated elsewhere (see 252, 1455 sqq., 1495 sqq.). Thus, he who finds that certain persons, places or things are for him a temptation to impurity must be guided by the principles given for occasions of sin (263 sqq.); he who finds that another wishes to seduce him into impurity must refuse all internal consent (see 254 sqq.), and must also resist violence when there is hope of success, or when this is necessary to avoid giving scandal or yielding consent (see on self-defense, 1841).

(b) Internal temptation comes from the flesh. It consists in inchoative disturbances or excitements of the organs or fluids that serve generation (e.g., erections, clitoral movements). Sometimes it is produced involuntarily, without any intention or consent of the will, by physiological states (e.g., conditions of the blood, nerves, etc., due solely to the weather, to disease, to aphrodisiac properties of ailment, to clothing, or position) or by psychical states (e.g., spontaneous images or appetites of the soul mentioned in 129), and in these cases the temptation is manifestly free from all sin. St. Pius V condemned the teaching of Baius that those who suffer motions of concupiscence against their will are transgressors of the command: "Thou shalt not covet" (see Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, nn. 1050, 1051, 1075). Sometimes the temptation is directly voluntary, as when the passion is deliberately awakened for the purpose of sin, and then there is grave guilt (see 2496 b). Sometimes the temptation is indirectly voluntary, as when with the foresight of the passion but without desire of it an action is performed that arouses it. In this last case, if there is a just reason for the excitatory action

(e.g., a physician sees and hears things that are calculated to be a temptation, but his reason is the exercise of his profession), no sin is committed; but if there is no just reason for the action (e.g., a person reads an erotic book, and curiosity is his only motive), sin is committed, and its gravity depends on the amount of danger to which one exposes oneself (see 2496 c).

2498. Resistance to Internal Temptations.--The fight against internal temptations is of various kinds.

(a) By reason of its subject, the conflict is chiefly in the will, to which it belongs to give or withhold consent; secondarily, in the other powers of the soul and the body, which under command from the will perform acts designed to overcome temptation.

(b) By reason of its manner, the conflict is either removal of the temptation (i.e., cessation from an act which produces the temptation) or resistance, passive or active. Passive resistance is the suspension of activity relative to the temptation till it ends of itself, as when internally the will neither consents nor dissents, or externally nothing is done for or against the temptation. Active resistance is positive opposition offered to temptation. It is made in two ways: first, by way of flight, as when internally the mind turns away to other thoughts (e.g., absorbing studies, meditation on the passion of Christ), or the will devotes itself to other subjects of resolve (e.g., acts of love of God or of purity), or externally the body is removed or freed from conditions that excite temptation; secondly, by way of attack, as when internally the mind turns against the temptation (e.g., thinking of its dangers, calling on God to drive it away), or the will rejects the temptation (e.g., by despising it, by expressing dislike, disapproval and unwillingness, by firmly resolving not to yield, by deciding on measures against the passion), or when externally the body is subjected to pain or mortification.

(c) By reason of its circumstances, resistance to temptation is either prolonged, as when the act by which the will resists is of considerable duration or is renewed at frequent intervals, or is brief, as when the act of rejection is momentary and is not repeated.

2499. What Opposition to Temptation Is Sufficient?--Opposition to temptations of the flesh must be sufficient to remove the temptation, when the temptation is due to the continuance of one's own sinful or unjustified act; for one is obliged to cease from sin or the unreasonable. This happens (a) when the temptation is directly voluntary--for example, one who wished to experience temptation and therefore reads a very seductive book must give over this reading; or (b) when the temptation is not directly voluntary and is without sufficient reason--for example, one who experiences carnal temptation due to a book which he reads from idle curiosity must desist from the book. But one is not bound to omit or interrupt necessary or useful acts, such as rest and sleep, prayer and charity; consent should be denied the evil, but the good should be continued.

2500. Insufficient, Harmful and Unnecessary Opposition.--In other cases opposition to temptations of the flesh must be such as is sufficient to keep one from consent, that is, to protect one against the proximate danger of sin.

(a) Hence, that resistance is insufficient which does not strengthen the will. It seems that passive will-resistance is of this kind, since it is most difficult for the will to remain inactive in the presence of carnal stimulation or motions of the sensible appetites without being moved by the evil suggestion. In external resistance, however, passive opposition suffices when it alone is feasible, as when temptation grows out of necessary work, or rest that cannot be discontinued or interrupted by active resistance, provided the will registers internally its displeasure or disapproval; but external passivity is not permissible when the will needs the help of external resistance, as in the case of vehement and prolonged temptations.

(b) That resistance is harmful which strengthens the temptation. Hence, resistance by direct attack or by formal rejection is oftentimes to be omitted in favor of resistance by flight or by contempt; for it is a common teaching of the Fathers and Doctors confirmed by experience that dwelling on reasons and means of repelling passion often adds to its strength, and that

resolving mightily and expressly to crush a weak and passing temptation often serves only to give it a longer life. It is better to brush a mosquito away than to risk one's neck by chasing it up and down stairs.

(c) That resistance is unnecessary which demands a physical or moral impossibility. Thus, a prolonged act of resistance or one repeated at intervals of a few minutes, or a resistance that includes extreme corporal austerities, is not required in ordinary cases at least. When a temptation is unusually vehement or is due to one's own fault, there should be proportionately greater resistance to offset the greater danger; but when a temptation is only moderately dangerous, it suffices to reject it firmly but briefly and to repeat this when there arises a new crisis or danger and the renewal of resistance is useful.

2501. Weapons against Carnal Temptations.--The most powerful weapons against carnal temptations are spiritual ones, and of these the most necessary is grace, which should be asked in prayer (Wis., viii. 21), especially through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary (see Pius XII, *„Sacra Virginitas“*, March 25, 1954). But corporal means, chiefly of a preventive kind, should not be neglected.

(a) Physical measures are the observance of what are now often spoken of as sex hygiene for normal and sex therapeutics for abnormal cases. Special health rules whose observance conduces to good morals are especially the cultivation of habits of bodily cleanliness, of hard mental and physical work, of vigorous exercise and the avoidance of unhealthful habits (such as constipation, drug or spirit stimulation), unsuitable clothing or sleeping conditions. Surgical or medical treatment for structural abnormalities or for mental or bodily diseases that react unfavorably on sex life requires the service of a conscientious and competent physician.

(b) Religious measures are various forms of corporal mortification, such as custody of the eyes and other senses, deprivation in food (fasting and abstinence) and sleep (vigils, night watches), afflictive penances through the use of hairshirts, painful girdles, scourges or disciplines. But austerities must be suited to the health, age, condition, duties and other circumstances of the person who practices them, and should not be used without the consent of one's confessor or spiritual director.

2502. Sinfulness of Negligence in Resisting Temptations.--It is sinful not to struggle against temptation, since he who in no way resists, not even passively, surrenders or yields to sin. Hence, the Church condemned the quietistic indifference to temptation of Molinos (Denzinger, nn. 1237, 1257, 1267). It is also sinful to resist, but only insufficiently, as regards promptness, vigor, manner, etc.

(a) The Theological Malice.--It is mortally or venially sinful to be negligent against temptation, according to the greatness or smallness of the danger to which the negligence exposes one (see 256-262). Thus, it is not a serious sin to omit all resistance to a weak and dying temptation, or to neglect from indolence or other venial fault all external resistance when the danger is made remote by the internal displeasure or resolution; but it is a serious sin to trifle with any very attractive temptation or to put off resistance until a progressing temptation has grown formidable and made self-control difficult, and this is true even though consent is not finally given to the impure suggestion.

(b) The Moral Malice.--Negligences in reference to carnal temptations do not differ specifically but only in degree, according to the approach the stimuli make towards complete lust. Even when there is an object (e.g., fornication, adultery) before the mind, the difference in species of the object, it seems, does not induce a difference in species of the sin, since the sin is the general one of carelessness in presence of temptation. Hence, it suffices to confess that one has been remiss in banishing impure emotions or thoughts.

2503. Applications.--(a) The principles here given in reference to emotions of the sensible appetite and rebellions of the flesh should be applied to other involuntary acts in the

imagination, reason and will (see 129). Thus, thoughts or images of impure scenes that pass through the mind should be treated in the same way as temptations of the flesh.

(b) The principles here given about the person who suffers temptation should also be applied to the person who causes temptation. Since it is a mortal sin to commit impurity, it is also a mortal sin to solicit impurity; since it is a mortal sin of lust to make oneself drunk in order to experience carnal emotions, it is also a mortal sin of lust to make another person drunk that he may become likewise inflamed; since it is a mortal sin to expose oneself to extreme danger by reading a pornographic work, it is also a mortal sin to wish to expose another to a like danger. And this is true even though the temptation is unsuccessful. Physicians who minimize the wrong of masturbation, or who counsel fornication to young men on the absurd plea that continence is unhealthy or productive of impotency, share in the guilt of pollution or fornication which they counsel; and young persons who seek to win the sinful love of others by nourishing their hair, painting their faces, exposing their bodies, etc., have the guilt, if not the gain, of seduction.

2504. Non-Consummated Sins of Impurity.--These include all those preparatory sins in which unlawful sex pleasure is not carried to completion by coition or pollution. We shall speak first of the internal sins of thought, delight, and desire (see 232 sqq.), and next of the external sins of unlawful looks, words, kisses, and embraces.

2505. Impure Thoughts.--Impure thoughts (*\_delectatio morosa\_*) are representations in the mind or imagination of impure venereal objects in which deliberate pleasure is taken.

(a) They are representations, that is, mental pictures or images of things absent from the senses, but thought of or imagined as present. Thus, impure thoughts differ from desires, which consist in attraction with will to accomplish, and also from sense contact of various kinds with objects present to the eyes, ears, or touch.

(b) They are joined with deliberate pleasure of the will, that is, one intends them or consents even momentarily to them after perceiving their presence and malice, even though carnal pleasure is not felt or does not threaten. Thus, impure thoughts differ from tempting thoughts, which are transient and unwished forms that appear in the mind, and are thought on before their true character is adverted to, or which gain a lodging in spite of efforts to eject them. A tempting thought is not sinful, but an occasion of merit when resisted, no matter how long it endures (see 2497 b).

(c) The pleasure is taken in a venereal object, that is, in the thought of fornication, adultery or other carnal sin, committed by oneself or by another. Hence, impure thoughts are not to be confused with the pleasure taken in knowledge about impurity (e.g., a professor of medicine or morality is not impure when he rejoices at the sexual knowledge he possesses and which is necessary for his duties, or willingly thinks about sex matters when it is necessary or useful for him to do so), or with pleasure taken in the morally indifferent manner of the venereal sin. For example, amusement over a ridiculous feature of a sin which one detests is not an impure thought (see 233-236).

2506. The Malice of Impure Thoughts.--(a) The Theological Malice.--Impure thoughts are mortal sins: for he who deliberately rejoices at the thought of sin, loves sin and is therefore guilty of it. They are venial sins when there is imperfect advertence, and also when there is lightness of matter on account of the remoteness of the danger of a thought only indirectly voluntary. They are mortal when there is full deliberation and the impure thought is directly voluntary or gravely dangerous (see 2496).

(b) The Moral Malice.--Impure thoughts have the same specific malice as the representation of the object which is entertained as a welcome guest in the mind; for not only is impurity given the hospitality of the mind, but a particular kind of impurity (see 90, 235). Hence it follows, first, that a specifically different object (as is the case with different consummated sins) makes a specifically different sin (e.g., to think pleasurably of unlawful intercourse is mental fornication



if the persons in mind are unmarried, and is mental adultery if the person in mind is married); secondly, that objects not specifically different--as is the case with different non-consummated sins of lewdness--do not make specifically different sins (e.g., to think pleurably of a sinful kiss and to think sinfully of a sinful touch are both mental lewdness or impure thoughts); thirdly, that special malices of the object from which the mind can prescind--viz., those which in the external act do not change the species or do not explain the venereal pleasure--and from which it does prescind, are not incurred (e.g., to think pleurably of sin with a woman who is married and a relative, if the thought that she is married or one's relative is not pleasing or is displeasing, is mental fornication, not mental adultery or mental incest). In praxi vero consulitur confessariis ut regulariter abstineant a quaestionibus de specie morali delectationis morosae; nam fideles plerumque nesciunt faciliter distinguere inter species morales cogitationum, et sic interrogatio evaderet vel inutilis, vel etiam ratione materiae periculosa. Ad hæc quum casus crebriores sint, maximo esset incommodo, tum confessariis, tum poenitentibus, si sacerdos exquireret quæ vix cognosci possunt. Sufficit igitur ordinarie sciscitari de specie theologica (utrum voluntas complacuerit), vel de specie morali generali (utrum actus internus delectatio morosa vel potius desiderium fuerit). See Canon 888, §2; Norms for Confessors in Dealing with the Sixth Commandment, Holy Office, May 16, 1943.

2507. Impure Rejoicing.--Impure rejoicing is a deliberate pleasure of the mind yielded to the recollection of a past sin of impurity. Hence, this sin of rejoicing is committed when one thinks with approval of a fornication of former days, but the sin of rejoicing is not committed when one confines one's pleasure to some good consequence of a fornication (e.g., the excellent child that was born), or to a lawful pleasure of the past, as when a widower thinks without present carnal commotion or danger of his former married life. The circumstances are more readily willed here than in impure thoughts, for here the mind is picturing an actual, not an imaginary case of sin, and the mental representation will therefore be more distinct; nevertheless, in the case of impure rejoicing the moral sub-species--at times even the distinction between impure rejoicing and impure thoughts--is usually not perceived. The principles of the previous paragraph apply to impure rejoicing.

2508. Impure Desires.--Impure desire is a deliberate intention to commit impurity in the future.

(a) It is a deliberate intention, that is, a purpose or will to which consent is given internally. Hence, an impure desire is not the same thing as a statement of fact, as when a passionate person declares that he would sin, were it not for fear of the consequences, meaning only that he is frail, not that he wishes to sin. Neither is it the same as a mere velleity, which desires venereal pleasure under circumstances that would make it lawful, as when a married man wishes that he were lawfully married to a woman other than his present wife, or that both he and the other woman were free to marry each other. But these velleities are foolish and venially sinful, and often on account of danger they are mortally sinful. An impure desire exists when the will consents unconditionally (as when a person decides or wishes to fornicate tomorrow) or conditionally under a proviso that does not take away the malice (as when a person decides that he would fornicate were it not for fear of punishment, or Wishes that it were lawful for him to practice fornication).

(b) It is an intention to commit impurity, and hence there is no impure desire in wishing what is not venereal pleasure (e.g., the spiritual, mental or bodily relief that follows on an involuntary pollution), or what is lawful venereal pleasure (e.g., when engaged persons think, but without carnal commotion or danger, of the benefits of their future married relationship).

2509. Malice of Impure Desires.--Impure desires are mortal sins and have the malice of the object and of the circumstances that one has in mind; that is, one commits the same kind of sin in desiring as in performing impurity. Hence, Our Lord declares that he who looks upon a woman to desire her unlawfully has already committed adultery in his heart (Matt., v. 28), and hence also the ninth commandment forbids sins of impure desire. The principles given in 2506, 2507, apply also to impure desires with this difference that the mind when it wills external performance considers the object as it is in itself, not as it is mentally represented, and hence is

less likely to prescind from actual circumstances known to it, But even here confessional investigation is sometimes not necessary on account of its moral impossibility.

2510. Lewdness.--After the internal sins follow the external sins of lewdness or indecency (\_impudicitia\_). These may be defined as "external acts which are performed from or with deliberate venereal pleasure that is not consummated, and which are not directed to the conjugal act."

(a) They are external acts of the body, such as the looks of the eye, the speech of the tongue, kisses of the lips, touches, fondling, embraces, pressure of the hand, etc. Those also are guilty of lewdness who permit themselves to be petted, kissed or otherwise impurely handled, unless it is morally impossible to resist, as when a woman who gives no internal consent cannot defend herself against a forced kiss without being killed, or cannot without great scandal refuse to shake hands with one whose motive is impure love. Lewdness (e.g., an impure look) may also be directed to one's own person, or to an animal, or to an artificial object, such as a statue or book.

(b) They are performed from or with pleasure; that is, passion either causes or accompanies the impure look or other act. These non-consummated acts are indifferent in themselves and may be licitly performed for a just cause; they become sinful by reason of the evil passion that animates them. The carnal motive appears either from the end of the act (e.g., an indecent kiss naturally tends to impurity or grave danger thereof, no matter what good purpose the kisser may have), or from the end of the one acting (e.g., a decent kiss becomes an impure act if the one who kisses is moved by carnal desire). Hence, there is no sin of lewdness when one of the acts now considered is performed becomingly as to externals and innocently as to the internal motive and quality (e.g., from a sense of duty, not from pleasure).

(c) The pleasure intended or consented to is venereal; that is, such as is consummated in copulation or pollution. Hence, there is no sin of lewdness when the acts in question are performed becomingly and with and for pleasure of a spiritual kind (as when members of a family give one another the customary kiss or embrace of affection), or of a merely sensual kind (e.g., when a nurse kisses the tender skin of an infant). On the distinction of intellectual, sensual and venereal pleasures see above (2461).

(d) The external act is not consummated by copulation or pollution. These are often its result but they are a different degree of sin, and lewdness is committed even without them (see 2486).

(e) Lewdness is an action not directed to the conjugal act. Coition itself is lawful in the married state, and this legitimizes all the preparatory or accessory endearments. Hence, the rule as to married persons is that venereal kisses and other such acts are lawful when given with a view to the exercise of the lawful marriage act and kept within the bounds of decency and moderation; that they are sinful, gravely or lightly according to the case, when unbecoming or immoderate; that they are venially sinful, on account of the inordinate use of a thing lawful in itself (85 a), when only pleasure is intended; that they are mortally sinful, when they tend to pollution, whether solitary or not solitary, for then they are acts of lewdness. The rights and duties during courtship and engagement will be treated below in Question III.

2511. Cases Wherein No Sin Is Committed.--Since lewdness proceeds from or is accompanied by culpable venereal pleasure, it does not exist in the following cases:

(a) in children who have not attained puberty and the capacity for sex pleasure, and hence there is no sin by reason of proximate danger in looks or touches exercised by them, which would be gravely sinful in those who have reached the age of puberty. These children may, however, sin against modesty or obedience, at least venially. They should be trained from their earliest years to reserve and decency, and it is a most serious sin to scandalize their innocence. The question of sex instruction for the young will be dealt with in the Question on the Duties of Particular States. If an adult person were as unmoved as a child by the stimulus of passion, such

a one would incur no personal guilt of lewdness by kissing and the like acts, but such an adult person is very rare;

(b) in adult persons when a dangerous act is exercised by them, without consent or proximate danger, and with a sufficient reason for the exercise. Thus, a student of literature may read an erotic story from the classics, if he is proof against the danger and intends only improvement in style, though for the young such books should be expurgated; a professor of medicine or moral theology may discourse prudently to his students on venereal diseases or sins; an artist may use naked models in painting, if and as far as this is necessary; farm hands may attend to the service of female by male animals; looks and touches that would otherwise be immodest are lawful for proportionate reasons of utility, as in bathing oneself, in performing the services of nurse or physician for others, etc. (see 2497 sqq.).

2512. Conditions Governing Propriety of External Acts.—The becomingness of the external acts spoken of in 2510 b includes two conditions.

(a) On the side of its object, the act must not be directed unnecessarily to the parts of the body that are shameful and private (i.e., the genitals and immediately adjacent parts). It is customary to distinguish the remaining or non-shameful parts of the body into becoming, which are uncovered (e.g., face, hands, feet), and less becoming, which are covered (e.g., legs, breast, back). But as to less decent parts much depends on local usage. For example, at a bathing beach it is not unbecoming to appear in a mixed crowd with uncovered legs or arms, and in very warm countries it is not improper to go about in public with less clothing than is worn in colder climates.

(b) On the side of its subject, the act must be performed with moderation and respect for reasonable custom. Thus, columbine (popularly called "French") kissing and the ardent or prolonged embraces known as "necking" or "petting" are admittedly indecent, even when not accompanied by sexual excitement. Oral abuse committed by or with either sex is indecent both as to the object, i.e., the part of the body involved, and as to the subject, i.e., the mode of action. It is the filthiest form of lewdness and is usually joined with pollution (irrumation).

2513. Morality of Kissing and Similar Acts.--(a) *\_Per se\_*, or from their nature, these acts are indifferent, since they can be employed, not only for evil (Job, xxxi. 27; Luke, xxii. 48), but also for good, as we see from the examples of the kiss of peace (I Thess., v. 26), the kiss of fraternal greeting (Gen., xxvii. 26, 27), and the kiss of respectful homage (Luke, vii. 38, 45).

(b) *\_Per accidens\_*, or from their circumstances, these acts are often venially or mortally sinful against purity or against some other virtue, or against both. Thus, justice is offended by injuries or violence (e.g., stolen kisses, unhygienic kisses that transmit venereal or other disease); charity is offended by scandal given the object of affection or the onlookers (e.g., kisses given by way of greeting to a member of the opposite sex by an ecclesiastic or religious, kisses forced upon children by grown-ups and which are harmful to the youthful sense of modest reserve); purity itself is offended by familiarities which, though not impure in themselves, constitute a peril for the virtue of one or both parties, as is true especially in demonstrations of sensual affection or pleasure. But even though there be some carnal commotion, it is not unlawful to give with a pure intention the decent salutation customary in one's country (e.g., to shake hands with a lady, to kiss one's stepmother or sister-in-law).

2514. Morality of Sensual Gratification.--Sensual gratification, or the pleasure experienced from the perfection in the sensible order of some object, is indifferent and lawful in itself (see 2461, 2492). When it is aroused by objects not venereally exciting (e.g., the beauty of the heavens or scenery, the harmony of music, the tender softness of the rose), it does not tempt to impurity; but when it is aroused by objects that are venereally exciting (e.g., the beautiful face or eyes or sweet voice or soft skin of a person much admired), it approaches so closely to the confines of venereal gratification as to seem almost the same thing. Hence arises the question; is deliberate sensual gratification about objects sexually exciting always a mortal sin?

(a) Many theologians answer in the affirmative, and give as their reason that in the state of fallen nature there is no one who can be assured that such gratification is not for him or her a proximate occasion of pollution, or of what is morally the same thing, of inchoate pollution. This opinion does not include gratifications not deliberately sought or yielded to, nor those in which experience has shown that the venereal attraction of the object, at least for the subject concerned, is nil or practically nil (e.g., sensual kisses of an infant by a nurse.)

(b) Other theologians dissent from the rigorous view, and argue that, since sensual and venereal attraction are really distinct, there is always the possibility of intending the former and excluding consent to the latter.

(c) To the present authors it seems that there is room for a middle way between these two extreme views. As was said above (2497), it is sometimes sinful and sometimes not sinful to encounter temptation, according to the intention and reason one has, and a temptation willed unjustifiably but only indirectly is a grave or a light sin according to the great or small danger that is risked. Now, it seems that certain forms of sensual gratification (e.g., those derived from beautiful but modest music or paintings) have only a very slight sexual allurements for even the passionate; whereas other forms (e.g., those derived from the warm kiss or caress of a handsome adult person of the opposite sex) are vehemently alluring. Hence, if sensual pleasure of the first kind is sought inordinately, or if it is dangerous to purity, there is a venial sin; if sensual pleasure of the second kind is sought, there is very likely mortal sin.

2515. The Theological Species of the Sin of Lewdness.--(a) *\_Per se\_*, or from its nature, this sin is mortal, even though the external act (kiss, etc.) be decent (see 2512) and of the briefest duration; for lewdness is consent to unlawful venereal pleasure, which from the nature of the case is a serious matter, tending either to illicit copulation or to pollution (see 2496). Hence, even a shake of the hand made with lustful intent is a mortal sin. If the guilt of adultery is found even in libidinous thoughts (Deut., v. 21) and glances (Matt., v. 28), much more is it found in lewd kisses, embraces, and conversations. Scripture strongly condemns every form of lewdness: impure speech ("Uncleanness let it not so much as be named among you, or obscenity, or foolish talking," Eph., v. 3, 4), impure reading ("Evil communications corrupt good morals," I Cor., xv. 33), impure looks ("Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart," Matt., v. 28), impure kisses and other touches ("It is good for a man not to touch a woman, but for fear of fornication let every man have his own wife," I Cor., vii. 1).

(b) *\_Per accidens\_*, this sin may be venial as follows: first, on account of the imperfection of deliberation, as when a person under the influence of liquor, drugs or sleep acts with only a partial realization of what he is doing, especially if the lewd offense has not occurred before; secondly, on account of the lightness of the matter, when the lewd act is indirectly voluntary and the danger remote (see 2496), as when slight danger is risked in gratifying the sensual desire to gaze at a famous painting, or in yielding to an impulse of curiosity, levity, or playfulness, to indulge in suitable recreations or even unnecessary conversations in which occur glances or touches that arouse some small degree of sexual emotion. Were mortal guilt of impurity incurred in these instances, very few could remain free from it unless there was a general retirement into isolation. But even in the *\_per accidens\_* cases there may be other mortal sins (e.g., that of drunkenness or of scandal).

2516. A large proportion of the sins of lewdness are only indirectly voluntary, and hence they are mortal or venial according to the amount of danger to which one exposes oneself. No ironclad rules, however, can be given to determine universally what things are gravely and what slightly dangerous, since the force and direction of concupiscence are not the same in all persons. Some persons are oversexed or passionate, others are undersexed or cold; some have normal, others abnormal inclinations (e.g., homosexuality, sadism, masochism, sexual fetishism) in matters venereal. Hypersexuality and abnormal sexuality are not in themselves sinful, but are manifestations of that inordinate concupiscence that is the effect of original sin and, if yielded to, becomes the cause of actual sin. Proximately they may be due to disease. But since these subjective differences do exist, what we shall set down in the following paragraphs

about gravity and lightness of danger is to be understood of the average or normal person and in the abstract, for it is impossible to consider every individual case.

2517. Circumstances That Increase or Lessen the Danger of Sin.--(a) The Person Acting.--There is less danger before and after than during puberty, less for an invalid than for a person full of health, less for an inhabitant of a cold region than for a dweller in the tropics, less for one habituated to suppress venereal passion (e.g., a bachelor) than for one who has been accustomed to indulge it (e.g., a widower), less in some cases for the married who can lawfully enjoy sexual intercourse than for the single who cannot. Familiarity also can give a certain amount of immunity (e.g., where naked bathing or naked statuary in public places is according to custom, the natives are less disturbed by these things than outsiders). Those who know (without self-deception) from their experience that certain things excite them very little do not run grave danger in encountering such things.

(b) The Person or Being Who Is the Object of the Act.--There is less allurements in an animal than in a human, less in a small than in a large animal, less in a representation than in the original, less in young children than in adults, less in one's own person or sex than in another person or the opposite sex, less in an elderly or homely person than in one who is young and attractive.

(c) The Sense Used.--Hearing (and, for a similar reason, reading) is less dangerous than sight, for hearing is nearer to the immanent activities of thought and desire, while sight has more of an eminent character (e.g., to hear or read about an obscene act is farther removed from it, and hence less seductive, than to see it in picture or reality). Sight in turn is less dangerous than touch, for sight is a more elevated and less material kind of perception, being exercised by a cognitional, not by a physical contact with its object, as is the case with touch (e.g., to behold others embrace is not so moving as to give or receive an embrace). Thus, impure touches (kisses, embraces, handling) are the most dangerous form of lewdness.

(d) The Sense-Object Acted Upon.--The degree of danger corresponds with the approach made to the act of generation (e.g., smutty stories are worse when they deal with consummated than with non-consummated acts) or to the genitals (e.g., impure touches are worse when directed to the organs of reproduction than to the non-shameful regions).

(e) The Manner.--There is greater danger when the act is prolonged than when it is momentary, when it is ardent than when it is calm (e.g., a passing glance or peep at an obscene picture is not as dangerous as a leisurely inspection, a loose linking of arms not as dangerous as a hug). The more exposed the object of attraction and the more secluded the parties themselves, the greater the danger (e.g., love-making between parties who are not fully clothed or who are alone in the dark or in a closed and curtained room is more dangerous than love-making between those who are properly dressed and seated among a crowd of people).

2518. Cases Wherein the Danger of Sin Is Grave or Slight.--A physician must know the difference between mortal and non-mortal diseases, and likewise a priest must know the distinction between various kinds of spiritual leprosies. But when certain cases are listed as less dangerous, this does not mean that they are not dangerous at all and that no account should be taken of them. Especially in the matter of impurity should the warning of Scripture be remembered: "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" (Ecclus., xix. 1). With this in mind, we now subjoin some examples of grave and slight danger for cases in which a lewd act is indirectly voluntary, but is prompted only by curiosity, joke, levity or other such insufficient reason.

(a) Speech.--Dirty or suggestive stories, conversations, songs, music, or radio entertainments are a grave danger when the persons present are very impressionable (e.g., on account of age or character), or if the topic is utterly vile (e.g., descriptions of filthy or unnatural sex acts), or if the manner is very seductive (e.g., the terms used are unfit for polite society, or the story is very detailed, or sin is boasted about, or the conversation is prolonged). On the other hand, the danger is light when the persons present are of mature age and not strongly inclined to impurity, especially if the topic and the language are not very disgusting; but there may be

serious sin on account of circumstances, as when the speaker or approving listener is a person from whom good example is expected. Obscene talk is generally not a serious sin when the persons are husband and wife, or a group of married men or of married women; on the contrary, it is generally a serious matter when the persons are a group of young people of the same sex, more serious when they are a mixed group, and still more serious when they are a boy and a girl or a young man and a young woman. The fact that those of the younger generation often do not admit this, does not change its abiding truth.

(b) Reading.--The remarks made on speech apply also to reading, which is a kind of silent speech. A noteworthy difference between the two in the present matter, however, is that reading is often more dangerous than conversation, since it is usually more protracted. Love letters and romances were once the chief temptation in this line, but today they seem mild in comparison with the supply of pornography that is easily accessible to all (e.g., the magazines and papers that pander to depraved tastes, the stories and pseudo-scientific books that corrupt the youth of every land). Even without grave danger to self, one may still be guilty of grave sin in reading obscene books on account of the cooperation with the vendors of immorality, or the scandal, or the disobedience thereby shown to the Church (see 1455 sqq., 1529, 1530).

(c) Looks.--There is generally no danger in a look at the full nudity of a small infant, or at the less becoming parts of a person of the same sex; there is generally only slight danger when the object is the privates of self or of another of the same sex, or the coition of animals, unless the gaze be fixed, prolonged and the object near; there is grave danger in beholding a completely non-infant naked person of the opposite sex, or the coition or other grave external sex acts of human beings (unless the glance be brief or not attentive), or even at times the less becoming parts of the opposite sex, if the look is very intent and continuous. Representations of the bodily parts or acts just mentioned (pictures, drawings, diagrams, etc.) have generally the same dangers as the originals, though the allurements in itself is less vivid; circumstances may even make the representations equally or more dangerous (e.g., on account of a thin veil of concealment in paintings or sculpture that only increases the attraction; or on account of the suggestive music, the voluptuous dance, the crowd atmosphere that accompanies an immoral scene on the stage or screen). The saying of Oscar Wilde that esthetics are above ethics is opposed both to morality (since all conduct should be guided by reason) and to art (for the highest beauty is that of virtue and the spirit and purity).

(d) Touches.--Kisses are seriously dangerous to purity when warmly or lingeringly exchanged between adults of different sex who are attracted to one another as male and female; in other cases, kisses, if impressed on decent parts of the body and in a decent manner, may be only slightly dangerous. Holding or grasping between such adults is also a serious danger when it is vehement (e.g., the tight squeeze or hug of certain dances) or long (e.g., the repeated or hour-long fondling of love-makers); it is of slight or no danger in other cases, as in the customary handclasp of greeting. Handling or feeling, if passing, hurried or light, is generally not dangerous, when it has to do with the becoming parts of another person, or with the less becoming parts of a person of the same sex, or with personal private parts; it is only slightly dangerous, under the same conditions, in reference to the verenda of animals or small infants; it is gravely dangerous when directed to the privates of another person who has passed infancy, or to the less becoming parts of a person of opposite sex, or to the breasts of a woman, unless it be entirely casual, passing, or light. Tactile contact made under the clothing is of course more dangerous than that which is external.

2519. The Moral Species of Lewdness.--(a) Theoretically, it is more probable that the imperfect sins of impurity do not differ from the perfect sins to which they tend; for the natural circumstances or antecedents of an act have really the same morality as the act itself (see 2486). In the physical order, the fetus, the infant, and the child do not differ essentially from the full-grown man; and likewise, in the moral order, the thought, the purpose and the external beginning do not differ essentially from completed murder, even though for some reason the act be not finished. Hence, immodest words, reading, looks and touches belong to fornication, or adultery, or incest, or sodomy, according to their tendency (e.g., to read an immodest love story with another man's wife and to kiss her is incipient adultery, and, if the guilty person has a

vow of chastity, it is also sacrilege). But the species is taken only from the object, not from the purely accidental circumstances, such as the elicitive faculty (e.g., an immodest look at another does not differ essentially from an immodest touch) or the intensity (e.g., incomplete pleasure in touches by one who has not attained puberty does not differ essentially, according to some, from the completed pleasure of which he is capable). Moreover, it seems that, in regard to looks if not as regards touch, abstraction (see 2506) is easily made by the guilty person from various circumstances; for example, one who looks immodestly on a person consecrated to God, may be thinking only of his unlawful love for a person of the other sex, and so may be guilty of incipient fornication, but not of sacrilege, or he may be thinking, without any affection for the other person, only of his own pleasure, and so may perhaps be guilty only of incipient pollution. A less probable opinion makes lewdness a species of sin distinct from pollution and the other consummated sins.

(b) Practically, penitents should confess that their sin was indecent and not completed lust (such as pollution), and they should also confess whether the lewdness was committed by speech, reading, looks, kisses, embraces, or touches; and also the object of the sin, whether male or female, whether married or single, relative or non-relative, etc. Otherwise, since few penitents know how to distinguish the moral species of sins, there will be great danger of incomplete confessions; and, moreover, the additional sins usually committed in cases of lewdness (e.g., scandals, injustices, and bad company keeping) will not be disclosed. If a consummated sin of fornication, pollution, etc., followed the indecency, this consummated sin should be confessed distinctly. Similarly, those who expose, incite or tempt others to impure thoughts or to lewdness in word, reading, looks, kisses or touches, should confess the kind of sin they intended (see 1497), even though their purpose failed, whether it was incipient fornication, sacrilege, sodomy, etc. But some authors admit a generic confession (in which the penitent merely states that he sinned mortally or venially, as the case was, by indecency), if the lewdness was solitary, or was committed with another but certainly without scandal or lustful desire of the other person.

2520. The Consummated Sins of Impurity.--There are in all seven species of completed acts of impurity. (a) Thus, some sins of impurity are against reason because they do not observe the ends of sexual intercourse. These ends are, first, the begetting of children (to which is opposed unnatural impurity), and, secondly, the rearing of children (to which is opposed fornication).

(b) Other sins of impurity are against reason because they violate a right of the person with whom intercourse is had (incest), or of a third party to whom that person belongs. If the third party is injured in conjugal rights, there is adultery; if in parental rights, there is defloration or rape, according as the injury is done without or with force; if in religious rights, there is sacrilege. This second category of sins is classed under impurity rather than under injustice, because the purpose of the guilty person and his act belong to venereal sin.

2521. Comparative Malice of the Sins of Consummated Lust.--(a) In the abuse of an act, the worst evil is the disregard of what nature itself determines as the fundamentals upon which all else depends, just as in speculative matters the worst error is that which goes astray about first principles. Now, the prime dictates of nature as to sexual intercourse are that it serve the race and the family. Hence, the sin of unnatural lust (which injures the race by defeating its propagation) and the sin of incest (which injures the family by offending piety) are the worst of carnal vices.

(b) In the abuse of an act a lesser evil is that which observes the natural fundamentals, but disregards what right reason teaches about things secondary, in the manner of performing the act. But reason requires that in sexual intercourse the rights of the individual be respected. A most serious violation of individual right is adultery, which usurps the right of intercourse belonging to another; next in gravity is rape, which violently seizes for lust a person under the care of another or undefiled; next is defloration, which trespasses on the right of guardianship, or removes bodily virginity, but without violence; last among these sins is fornication, which is an injury done not to the living, but to the unborn.

2522. Multiplication of Sins of Lust.--The various kinds of lust may be combined in one and the same act, as when unnatural vice (e.g., sodomy) is practiced with a relative (incest). Sacrilege, of course, aggravates every other kind of carnal sin, and thus there is sacrilegious sodomy, sacrilegious adultery, sacrilegious incest, etc.

2523. Fornication.--Fornication is the copulation of an unmarried man with an unmarried woman who is not a virgin.

(a) It is copulation, or sexual intercourse suited for generation of children. Thus, it differs from lewdness, which consists in unconsummated acts, and from sodomitic intercourse, which is consummated but unsuited for generation. Onanism is an aggravating circumstance of fornication, or rather a new sin of unnatural intercourse. (b) It is committed by unmarried persons, and thus it differs from adultery. (c) It is committed with a woman, and is thus distinguished from sodomy. (d) It is committed with a woman who is not a virgin, and thus differs from defloration.

2524. Sinfulness of Fornication.--It is of faith that fornication is a mortal sin.

(a) Thus, it is gravely forbidden by the divine positive law. Hence, whores and whoremongers are an abomination to the Lord (Deut., xxiii. 17); fornicators are worthy of death (Rom., i. 29-32), they shall not enter the kingdom of God (Gal., V. 19-21; Eph., v. 5; Heb., xiii. 4; Apoc., xxi. 8). The Fathers teach that fornication is a grave crime (St. Fulgentius), and that it brings condemnation on the guilty person (St. Chrysostom). The declarations of the Church on the evil of this sin are found in the Council of Vienne and in the censures of Alexander VII and Innocent XI (Denzinger, nn. 477, 1125, 1198).

(b) Fornication is gravely forbidden by the natural law. For it is seriously against reason to cause an injury to the entire life of another human being; but fornication does this very thing by depriving the unborn child of its natural rights to legitimacy, to the protection of both parents, and to education in the home circle. True, in some cases there may be no prospect of a child, or there may be provision for its proper rearing; but these cases are the exception, since fornication from its nature tends to the neglect of the child, and the morality of acts must be judged, not by the exceptional and accidental, but by the usual and natural. Those who commit fornication are thinking of their own pleasure rather than of duty, and will generally shirk the difficult burdens of parenthood. Society also would be gravely wounded if unmarried intercourse were at any time lawful. Hence, St. Paul reproves the pagans, though ignorant of Scripture, for their sins of fornication (I Cor., vi. 9-11; Eph., v. 1-6), since reason itself should have taught them the unlawfulness of this practice. It seems, though, that invincible ignorance of the wrong of fornication is possible among very rude or barbarous people, since the injury to the neighbor does not show itself so clearly in this sin as in many others.

2525. Fornication Compared with Other Sins.--(a) It is less serious than those that offend a divine good (e.g., unbelief, despair, hatred of God, irreligion), or human life (e.g., abortion), or the human goods of those already in being (e.g., adultery). (b) It is more serious than sins that offend only an external good (e.g., theft), or that are opposed only to decency in the marriage state (e.g., unbecoming kisses of husband and wife).

2526. Circumstances of Fornication.--(a) Circumstances that aggravate the malice are the condition of the person with whom the sin is committed (e.g., that the female is a widow, or the employee of the man, or his ward, or a minor).

(b) Circumstances that add a new malice to fornication are of various kinds. Thus, previous circumstances are the distinct desires of the sin entertained beforehand, the solicitation and scandal of the other party or parties with whom the sin was committed; concomitant circumstances are the quality of the persons (e.g., fornication is sacrilegious if one of the parties is consecrated to God, and also, according to some, if one party is a Christian and the other an infidel; it is unjust if one of the couple is betrothed to a third party), or the quality of the act itself (e.g., if it is performed onanistically, though pollution may be excused if it results



accidentally from the good purpose to discontinue the sinful act); subsequent circumstances are injury done to the partner in sin (e.g., by refusal to pay the support or restitution due) or to the offspring (e.g., by exposure, abortion, neglect).

Whether the fornication of an engaged person with a third party is a distinct species of sin is disputed. (a) According to some, it is a distinct species, or at least a form of adultery on account of the infidelity. (b) According to others, it is a distinct species if the guilty party is the woman, but not if it is the man, for the infidelity of the former is a far more serious matter than the infidelity of the latter. (c) According to still others, it is never a distinct species, since engagement to marry is a dissoluble agreement and the injury to the contract is therefore not a notable one. In this last opinion the manner of the sin is an aggravating circumstance, not a distinct species that has to be declared in confession.

2527. Forms of Fornication.--There are three special forms of fornication, which are all the same essentially, but which differ accidentally in malice or in results.

(a) Thus, ordinary fornication is that which is committed with a woman who is neither a harlot nor a concubine. This sin is in itself the least grave of the three, since it is not so harmful as whoremongering, nor so enduring as concubinage. Ordinary fornication also has its degrees of bad and worse: thus, engaged persons who sin together habitually are worse than those who sin only occasionally, and circumstances such as artificial onanism and abortion add to the guilt.

(b) Whoremongering is fornication committed with a harlot, that is, with a woman who makes a business of illicit intercourse and hires herself out for pay to all comers. Rarely does a harlot choose her life from passion or love, but is dragged in by white slavers, or enters from poverty, or after disgrace, or the like. This sin is worse than ordinary fornication from the viewpoint of propagation, since few harlots become mothers. But its most dire consequences are visited on the guilty persons themselves and on society: for the life of a prostitute is a most degrading slavery; to her patrons she communicates the most terrible diseases, which are then carried to innocent wives and children, and to the innocent she often becomes a cause of ruin, seeking her trade in the streets and public places. Today, according to reliable newspaper reports, many men and women have become rich in the terrible business known as the white-slave traffic. This horrible abuse has grown into a vast international machine which is efficiently organized, and which profits not only from prostitution, but from many other kinds of crime. The patrons of brothels, therefore, cooperate with the crying injustice that is often done the fallen woman, and with the criminals who destroy souls and bodies for their own advantage.

(c) Free love is fornication committed with one's concubine, that is, with a woman who is not a public harlot but who has contracted with one man for habitual sexual intercourse as if they were man and wife. According to reports, this is quite common in Europe, where lawful marriage is very often preceded by free unions. The trial marriage advocated by some in this country, in which paramours agree to live together as husband and wife for a certain term of years or at pleasure, also falls under the category of concubinage. This sin is worse than mere whoremongering in one respect, namely, that it includes the purpose to continue in the state of sin, at least for a certain length of time. Moreover, there is often the public scandal and contempt for public opinion which other kinds of fornication may be free from. One who practices concubinage is living in a proximate occasion of sin, and hence he cannot be absolved unless he dismisses the concubine, if they cohabit, or agrees to keep away from her, if they do not cohabit.

2528. The State and Places of Prostitution.--It is clear that civil government has no right to support or provide places of prostitution, or to give permission for its practice, since fornication is intrinsically evil. But what should be said of toleration or license given to prostitutes by the public authority?

(a) Theoretically, the civil power has the right to give toleration or license; for, if the common welfare will suffer from a greater evil unless a lesser evil is suffered to go on, the lesser evil

should be endured, and it is certain that there are greater evils than prostitution (such as rape and unnatural crimes of lust).

(b) Practically, the question is open to dispute. Older moralists held that toleration was actually more beneficial to the common good than suppression. But under the conditions of the present time many moralists think it is a mistake to give any recognition to prostitutes, and much less to houses of prostitution. Even in large cities, where alone the license could be beneficial, the purposes of toleration are not fulfilled; for the moral evil seems to be greater, since an appearance of legality is given to prostitution, its practice is facilitated, its habitats become dens of every kind of iniquity, and the purpose of segregation is not realized; the physical evils also are not lessened, but perhaps increased, for even with medical inspection of prostitutes, syphilis and gonorrhea cannot be prevented.

2529. Defloration and Rape.--Defloration and rape are distinct species of lust, for each of them in its very concept includes a special and notable deformity not found in other species of impurity.

(a) Defloration is unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman who is virginal in body (1488 a). It has the special deformity of depriving the woman of the physical integrity that is most highly prized among all the unmarried of her sex, or at least of her own self-respect, and of setting her on the way to become a strumpet rather than an honorable wife or spinster. Some authors do not consider defloration a special sin unless it is done by violence, or unless injury is done the parental right over the virgin; and even the authors who consider unforced defloration a special sin hold that the new or additional malice in it is slight and venial, and therefore not a necessary matter of confession. The first sin of fornication by a male is not a special sin, because the consequences are not so serious for the man as for the woman, but of course seduction is always a special sin, whether the injured party be male or female.

(b) Rape is physical or moral coercion (i.e., force or fear) employed against any person (male or female, married or single, pure or corrupt), or against his or her guardians, to compel him or her to an act of lust. It has the special deformity of inflicting bodily injury on the person ravished. The sin of rape should not be confused with the canonical crime of rape, which consists in abduction, and which is an impediment to marriage (Canon 1074); nor with seduction, as when an innocent person is deceived into believing that an act of impurity is lawful, or is tricked into sin by false promises of marriage. Equivalent to rape is the carnal knowledge of a person drugged, hypnotized, or otherwise unconscious, or the seduction of an infant. A person who is ravished is obliged to deny all consent internally, and to resist or make outcry when this is possible (see 2497 a).

2530. Adultery.--Adultery is also a distinct species of lust.--(a) Definition.--Adultery is sexual intercourse with the husband or wife of another. If the sin is committed only in desire, there is mental adultery; if the paramours allow themselves unlawful familiarities without intercourse, or if a married person is guilty of solitary lust, there is imperfect adultery.

(b) Sinfulness of Adultery.--Adultery is a grave sin, since it is an act of impurity and is expressly forbidden in the sixth commandment (Exod., xx. 14), and is classed among the sins that exclude from the kingdom of heaven (I Cor., vi. 9, 10). It is a special sin, because it is a violation of the faith pledged in the contract and Sacrament of Matrimony, and an injury to the right of one's spouse and of the conjugal state (Matt., xix. 5; Rom., vii. 3; I Cor., vii. 39). Even though a husband gives his wife permission to commit adultery or vice versa, the injustice remains, for though the individual is not formally injured, the married state is injured, since no married person has the right to give a permission opposed to the sacredness of the marriage vows (Denzinger, n. 1200).

(c) Degrees of Malice.--There are three degrees of malice in adultery. The first is that in which a married man sins with a single woman; the second that in which a married woman sins with a single man; the third that in which a married man sins with another man's wife. The second is worse than the first, on account of its consequences (e.g., sterility, uncertainty of paternity,

rearing of an illegitimate child in the family); the third is worse than the second, because in addition to the consequences just mentioned, it contains a double injustice (viz., unfaithfulness to an innocent wife and unfaithfulness to an innocent husband), and it multiplies the sin. If an adulterer's husband or wife is also unfaithful, the injustice is lessened, but not removed; for not merely the two married persons are to be considered, but also the children, the family, society, and God; and the wrong done by one of the parties does not take away the right to fidelity pledged absolutely to all of these in marriage.

(d) Effects.--The party whose marriage rights have been injured by adultery was permitted under some former civil codes to kill a wife taken in adultery. But such laws were against justice and charity: against justice since no guilty person should be put to death unheard, and no injured person should be judge and accuser in his own case; against charity, since by such summary vengeance the adulteress would be sent to death in the midst of sin and without opportunity for repentance. The remedies of Canon Law for the innocent spouse will be noted below (2542).

2531. Incest.--Incest is impurity committed with a person related to one within the degrees in which marriage is forbidden.

(a) It is impurity, internal or external. Internal desires are mental incest, while external unconsummated (e.g., kisses) or consummated (e.g., intercourse) acts are actual incest.

(b) It is committed with a relative, that is, with a person, male or female, who is near to one by the tie of common ancestry (blood relationship, kinship, consanguinity), or of marriage to one's kin (marriage relationship, affinity), or of sacramental administration (spiritual relationship), or of adoption (legal relationship). *Alias species cognationis non pertinent ad incestum, sed novam aliquam malitiam possunt tribuere; v.g., si partes sunt parochus et parochiana, confessarius et poenitens, habetur scandalum, seductio.*

(c) The relationship is within the canonical degrees. Thus, marriage between blood relatives is forbidden in all degrees of the direct line (e.g., as to all female ancestry and posterity of a man) and in the first three degrees of the collateral line, which includes, for a man, his sisters, nieces, grandnieces, aunts, first and second cousins, grand aunts and their daughters and granddaughters. Marriage between those who are relatives-in-law is forbidden in all degrees of the direct line (e.g., as to wife's mother, daughter, etc.) and in the first two degrees of the collateral line (e.g., wife's sister, first cousin, aunt or niece). Spiritual relationship which is impediment of marriage exists between a person baptized and his baptizer, and also between the god-child and the god-parent in baptism. Legal relationship exists between the adopter and the adopted, when and as the civil law makes it a bar to marriage.

(d) Incest is committed within the forbidden degrees, and hence if a dispensation from an impediment of relationship had been granted to parties about to marry, a sin between them would not be incestuous.

2532. Incest as a Distinct Species of Sin.--(a) There is a specific distinction between incest and other forms of lust, since incest violates not only purity, but also the piety and respect due each other by those who are so closely related as to be unable to contract a lawful marriage. Nature itself abhors this sin; for, apart from the exceptional cases in which a dispensation is given, even lawful marriage with near relatives would be an incentive to many sins before marriage and would prevent the widening circle of friendships between mankind which marriage with non-relatives produces, and would cause a physical and mental enfeeblement of the race. In Scripture incest is spoken of with peculiar horror as a nefarious deed deserving of death (Lev., xx. 11 sqq.), and as an act unworthy even of pagans (I Cor., v. 1 sqq.).

(b) There are three distinct sub-species of incest, namely, natural incest (between kin by blood or marriage), spiritual incest (between the baptized and his baptizer or god-parent), and legal incest (between persons who are kin in virtue of, marriage-impeding adoption). The first violates piety due to natural origin, the second that due to spiritual origin, and the third that

due to legal origin. And in each species the nearer the relationship, the greater the sin (e.g., incest with a sister-in-law is less than that with a sister, incest with a sister is less than that with a mother).

2533. Carnal Sacrilege.--Carnal sacrilege is the violation by an act of impurity of the sacredness of a person, place or thing.

(a) It is a violation of sacredness, and thus it is a special sin, adding irreligion to lust (see 2308 sqq.).

(b) It is an act of impurity, internal or external, consummated or non-consummated. The impurity, however, must be so related to that which is sacred as to treat its sanctity with injury or contempt (formal disrespect), and there is no sacrilege if the impurity is associated with something holy in such a way as not to show any notable irreverence (material disrespect).

(c) Its first species is personal sacrilege, and it is committed by a sacred person (see 2309) when he is impure internally or externally, or by a non-sacred person when in desire or act he commits impurity with a sacred person. If two sacred persons sin together, there is a double sacrilege, which multiplies the sin.

(d) Its second species is local sacrilege, and is committed when an impure act is done in a sacred place (2311) in such a way as to show formal disrespect. Hence, consummated acts done in a church are sacrilegious, and the same is probably true of non-consummated acts, at least if they are of an enormous kind (e.g., a lascivious dance), and even of internal desires to sin in the sacred place. But impure thoughts or passing glances of prurient curiosity in a church are not sacrilegious.

(e) Its third species is real sacrilege, and it occurs when impurity is committed in such a way as to show formal disrespect to a sacred object (2311). Hence, there is sacrilege of this kind when one commits impurity immediately after Communion, or when one uses the Sacrament of Penance as a means to solicit impurity. But the fact that a person commits impurity while wearing a scapular is not sacrilegious, unless contempt for the scapular was intended.

2534. Unnatural Lust.--Worst among the sins of impurity, as such, are crimes of unnatural lust, for they exercise the sexual act, not only illicitly, but also in a manner that defeats its purpose of reproduction. In some non-venereal respects, however, natural sins of impurity may be worse than the unnatural; for example, adultery is worse as regards injustice, sacrilegious lust as regards irreligion, etc. There are four distinct species of unnatural impurities-- pollution, unnatural coition, sodomy, bestiality (see Denzinger, n. 1124).

(a) For procreation nature requires copulation, and hence pollution is unnatural, for it exercises semination without copulation, either alone (self-abuse, solitary vice, masturbation) or with another (softness).

(b) For procreation nature requires proper copulation, that is, one that will permit of a fertile union between the two life elements, the sperma and the ovum. Hence, unnatural coition does not comply with this necessity, for it does not employ the proper organ of sexual union, substituting rectal for vaginal intercourse, or else by some form of natural or artificial onanism it frustrates the act of its destined conclusion. This sin is worse than pollution, since pollution omits to use intercourse, whereas unnatural coition positively abuses it.

(c) For procreation nature requires heterosexual intercourse, a condition disregarded by sodomy, which is the lustful commerce of male with male (pederasty, uranism), or of female with female (tribadism, sapphism, Lesbian love). This sin is worse than unnatural coition, for it is a greater perversity to neglect one of the two needed life elements than to neglect the right process for their union (see Gen., xix. 24, 25; Lev., xx. 13; Rom., i. 26, 27),

(d) Finally, for procreation nature requires homogeneous intercourse, a law violated by bestiality, which is coition of a human being, male or female, with a brute animal. This is the worst of unnatural impurities, since it sins against the most fundamental condition for the sexual act, namely, that the participants be of the same nature (see Lev., xx. 15, 16). Similar to bestiality is the crime of necrophilism (intercourse with a corpse).

2535. Pollution.--Pollution is the voluntary emission of semen apart from coition.

(a) It is an emission, that is an external discharge. The internal secretion in the so-called female semination is also included by many under the head of pollution. The carnal motions spoken of in 2497 b are a preparation for pollution.

(b) It is a discharge of semen, that is, of the male fluid that fertilizes the female ovum. But equivalent pollution, from the moral viewpoint, is found in the discharge of certain non-prolific fluids that are accessory to generation or that produce in their movement a venereal satisfaction, such as the vaginal fluid in females (female semination), the urethral fluid in males capable or incapable of procreation (distillation). There is no pollution, however, in natural discharges such as menstruation and urination.

(c) It is apart from coition, and thus it differs from other consummated sins. But pollution may be committed either alone (solitary vice), or with another, and in the latter case it pertains reductively to adultery, fornication, sodomy, etc., as the case may be.

(d) It is voluntary directly or indirectly: directly, when one intends it as an end (e.g., for the sake of the pleasure) or as a means (e.g., as a relief from temptation or bodily itching, to obtain a specimen of semen for medical diagnosis); indirectly, when one unjustifiably does something from which one foresees that pollution will result. In all these cases pollution is formal or sinful, and it is not to be confused with material or natural pollution, which is a discharge of semen or distillation that is involuntary or unimputable.

2536. Cases of Material or Non-Sinful Pollution.--(a) Involuntary pollution is passive or active. The former happens even when one is awake. It is evoked by such slight causes as physical movement and exertion, and is unaccompanied by pleasure; when habitual, it is a disease due to organic debility. The latter happens during sleep, and may be caused by a superfluity of fluid. It is accompanied by pleasure and often by libidinous dreams. It is a means used by nature to relieve the system, and is therefore healthful and beneficial, unless the discharges are too frequent (e.g., nightly). There is no obligation of repressing the continuance of a pollution that began involuntarily during sleep, since it may be regarded as an act of nature; but consent must be withheld (2498 sqq.). Moreover, if merely natural pollution be considered, not as to its venereal gratification but solely as to its good effects (e.g., that it ends a temptation, that it benefits the mind or the health), there is no sin in rejoicing at its accomplishment or in desiring its fulfillment, provided nothing is done to produce it and the intention is good; for then the object of the will is indifferent and the end is good.

(b) Unimputable pollution is caused by a lawful act from which one foresees that pollution will ensue, there being no proximate danger of consent to sin, and the pollution being only permitted, and that for a proportionately grave reason.

2537. Unimputable Pollution.--In reference to unimputable pollution the following distinctions should be noted:

(a) the danger risked by an act may be either of formal pollution (i.e., with consent to sin) or of material pollution (i.e., without consent to sin);

(b) the danger of pollution is either proximate or remote, the former being that from which pollution naturally and usually results and the latter that from which it does not naturally or usually result. Remotely dangerous are acts of a non-venereal kind, such as horseback riding, gymnastics, drinking alcoholic beverages, and also acts of a sexual kind that are only mildly

exciting, such as conversations or books that are slightly "off color" when the parties are of mature age (see 2517, 2518). Proximately dangerous are acts of a venereal kind that notably inflame passion, such as warm and lingering kisses between persons of opposite sexes (see 2517, 2518);

(c) the reason for running the danger of pollution is either grave, serious, or slight. A grave reason is real necessity (e.g., the removal of disease or pain or of a very painful or troublesome itch due to the blood or disease) or great utility (e.g., the preservation of health, cleanliness of body); a serious reason is an important convenience of soul or body (e.g., the exercise of common politeness, the enjoyment of reasonable comfort); a slight reason is one in which none of the mentioned motives is found (e.g., the satisfaction of an idle curiosity, the removal of a trifling irritation or itch).

2538. Proximate and Remote Occasions of Pollution.--It is never lawful to expose oneself to the immediate danger of sin, for he who loves the danger loves the sin (see 258, 260); but if one uses means to make the danger remote, one may lawfully encounter it for a good reason (see 258, 260, 261). It is lawful to permit an evil effect when there is sufficient justification according to the principle of double effect (see 103 sqq.).

(a) Hence, if there is proximate danger of formal pollution (that is, of consent to sin), no reason excuses an act even of a non-sexual kind, such as horseback riding. But if the act is necessary, the danger must be made remote by the use of special means, such as prayer, firm resolves, etc. (see 2497 sqq.).

(b) If there is proximate danger of material pollution, a grave reason suffices (e.g., the care of patients by physicians and nurses, assistance of bathers by attendants, warm soporific drinks taken for the sake of sleep).

(c) If there is remote danger of material pollution, a serious reason suffices (e.g., customary salutations of the country, physical exercises, moderate comfort in posture, seasoning in food.). A slight reason may excuse at times from mortal sin (e.g., unnecessary curiosity about the sciences of anatomy or sexology).

2539. The Theological Malice of Sinful Pollution.--(a) From its nature pollution is a mortal sin, because it is an act of impurity (1494) and a perversion of nature (2534). Moreover, its consequences are most injurious to society (it tends to self-indulgence and the avoidance of the burdens of marriage) and to the individual (when habitual, it weakens mental and will power and often brings on a breakdown of bodily vigor especially among young people). In Scripture it is represented as gravely illicit (I Cor., vi. 10; Gal., v. 19; Eph., v. 3). Hence, pollution is always a mortal sin when directly willed (e.g., when practiced deliberately in order to be rid of a temptation or of bodily irritation or itch certainly due to superfluity of semen or to passion), and also when indirectly willed if there is proximate danger of consent to sin (e.g., when one who has always committed formal pollution in certain company goes into that company without necessity, or without use of means to prevent a fall) or grave danger of pollution and no sufficient reason for permitting it (e.g., undue familiarities from which nocturnal pollution is foreseen as most probable).

(b) From the imperfection of the internal act, pollution is sometimes only a venial sin. This happens in case of invincible ignorance (e.g., young children who do not understand the evil of masturbation, students who have been taught by instructors or physical directors that it is necessary for health or that it is unsanitary but not sinful), or of incomplete consent (e.g., when the person is only half awake and does not ordinarily desire pollution, when he is a psychopathic and not fully responsible for his acts).

(c) From the lightness of the matter pollution is venial when willed indirectly and permitted without sufficient reason, if there is only slight danger of it from the nature of the action performed (see 2496). Examples are the reading for pastime of love stories before falling asleep with the prevision that this may possibly bring on pollution during sleep.

2540. If the action productive of pollution is gravely illicit, as being seriously opposed to chastity (e.g., lewdness) or to some other virtue (e.g., extreme intemperance in drugs or alcohol), is one thereby guilty of the grave sin of pollution?

(a) If the case be considered in the abstract, the answer is in the negative. For if the action in question is only remotely dangerous as regards pollution (e.g., an action of a non-venereal kind such as intemperance does not necessarily tend to impurity, an act of a venereal kind that is momentary, such as a desire, does not strongly affect the passions), the sin is only venial in so far as pollution is concerned (see 2517, 2518).

(b) If the case be considered in the concrete, the answer is in the affirmative as a rule when there is question of a habit. For generally those who act habitually in this way yield consent to the pollution as well as to the sin that precedes. Authorities note, however, that he who repents of the cause of pollution before the pollution results is not guilty of the actual pollution.

2541. The Moral Species of Sinful Pollution.--(a) The general species of pollution is distinct from other consummated sins of impurity, since it is unnatural, and this in a special way (see 2534, and Denzinger, n. 1124), But some authors regard equivalent pollution (see 2493, 2535) as not a consummated sin, since it is without true semination, and hence according to them it may be confessed simply as impure pleasure (see 2519 b).

(b) The particular species of pollution is derived from circumstances that give it a new essential malice. If it is solitary, and committed by one who is under no bond of marriage or vow, and accompanied by no thought or desire except in reference to self or self-gratification (autoerotism, narcissism), there is the single sin of pollution. But there are other sins if it is committed by one under special obligation (i.e., adultery or sacrilege), or if committed with another person (e.g., seduction, cooperation, rape), or if committed with impure thoughts or desires about others (e.g., mental adultery, fornication, sodomy, bestiality). The manner in which pollution is performed (e.g., whether cooperative pollution is active or passive, by irrumation or concubitus or touch, with or without an instrument) is *per se* an accidental circumstance. According to some authors, cooperative pollution brought on by touch alone is not diversified in species, if there is no special affection for the other person, but only the desire of carnal gratification, and hence it may be declared simply as pollution from touch.

2542. Penalties for Immorality Decreed in Canons 2357-2359.--(a) Laymen who are guilty of certain offenses against the sixth commandment become infamous on conviction and are excluded from legitimate ecclesiastical acts. In case of adultery, the injured spouse may obtain a separation, temporary or perpetual, from the offending spouse (Canon 1129). (b) Clerics in minor orders are subject to special punishments, and may even be dismissed from the clerical state. (c) Clerics in major orders are subject to penalties named in law (e.g., suspension, infamy, deposition) for graver crimes such as concubinage, adultery, and to penalties decreed by the lawful superior for other delinquencies.

2543. The Potential Parts of Temperance.--The appetites of pleasure are the most difficult to restrain, and there is need of a perfect virtue like temperance to rule over them and keep them within the bounds of reason. The analogous or potential virtues of temperance are that one which is able to check, though it does not tame, the animal appetites (continency), and those that preside and rule over the less violent appetites for vengeance, exercise of authority, superior excellence, knowledge, amusement and display (meekness, etc.). See above, 2465 c.

2544. Continence.--(a) Its Nature.--This quality, as here taken, is the state of one who has not gained mastery over the passions sufficient to keep down strong, frequent and persistent rebellions, but whose will is firmly disposed to resist their attacks. It is less than a moral virtue, then, since it does not tranquillize the lower appetites. The temperate man has already subdued his passions, and hence he is less disturbed by them, or at least he has less trouble in rejecting their onsets.

(b) Its Relation to Temperance.--Greater difficulty increases merit, if it is due to the presence of a corporal or external impediment (e.g., a man of sickly constitution or one who suffers great opposition deserves more credit for his work than a man of vigorous constitution or one who enjoys great favors and opportunities); not, however, if it is due to the absence of a spiritual excellence (e.g., a man who finds work hard because he is lazy does not deserve more credit than another who finds it easy because he is industrious). Hence, temperance is more deserving than continence, for it controls passion with greater ease simply because it has subjected not only the higher but also the lower appetite to the dictates of reason.

(c) Its Opposite.--The vice opposed to continence is incontinence, which does not follow the dictate of reason to resist the onslaughts of passion; it sees and approves the higher things, but it follows the lower. This sin is less grievous than intemperance, just as a passing indisposition is less harmful than a settled malady. For passion comes and goes, and the incontinent man quickly regrets his weakness; but a sinful habit of gluttony or impurity is permanent, and is so like a second nature that its votaries rejoice when they have satisfied their desires (Prov., ii. 14). Incontinence in pleasure is more disgraceful than incontinence in anger, for anger is less distant from reason; but on the other hand the irascible man usually sins more grievously by the greater harm he does to others. It is more difficult to contain oneself from wrath than from intemperance in the sense that wrath storms the soul by a more vehement and compelling attack; yet, it is harder to be unconquered by pleasure, because it lays persistent siege to the soul and demands a more unwearied vigilance.



# Pornography Statistics: Annual Report 2014

Below is a sample of statistics about pornography. Each stat or quote has been carefully researched and referenced with the original source in our Pornography Statistics PDF document. In this way, this compilation of stats, quotes, and figures do not act as a last word on the subject, but as a first word, providing a good starting place for your own research.

## Porn Searches

By 2015, mobile adult content and services are expected to reach \$2.8 billion per year, mobile adult subscriptions will reach nearly \$1 billion, and mobile adult video consumption on tablets will triple. We are already starting to see an increase in mobile adult content.

"It seems so obvious: If we invent a machine, the first thing we are going to do—after making a profit—is use it to watch porn."

- Damon Brown, Author of Playboy's Greatest Covers

## Porn Content Stats

1,125,464,934: The number of searches for pornography since the start of 2014.

9 out of 10 Internet porn users only access free material, whether it be samples of pay material, illegally copied versions of pay material, or amateur material.

1 in 5 mobile searches are for pornography.

24% of smartphone owners admit to having pornographic material on their mobile handset.

## Learn How to Monitor Your Kids' Searches

How many Internet-enabled devices are in your home? What about your son's iPod touch™ or your daughter's Kindle Fire HD? Often kids use these devices to go online and their parents don't even have a clue.

## The Porn Industry

In 2006, estimated revenues for the sex-related entertainment business were just under \$13 billion in the US. These estimates included video sales and rentals, Internet sales, cable, pay-per-view, phone sex, exotic dance clubs magazines, and novelty stores.

"Porn doesn't have a demographic—it goes across all demographics."

- Paul Fishbein, Founder of Adult View News

## The Porn Industry Stats

The porn industry generates \$13 billion each year in the US.

Internet porn alone is a \$3 Billion per year business.

79% of porn performers have used marijuana, and 50% have used ecstasy.

88% of scenes in porn films contain acts of physical aggression, and 49% of scenes contain verbal aggression.

"66% of porn performers have Herpes, 12-28% have sexually transmitted diseases, and 7% have HIV."

- Dr. Sharon Mitchell

"Amateurs come across better on screen. Our customers feel that. Especially by women you can see it. They still feel strong pain."

- Carlo Scalisi, Owner of 21 Sexury Video

**Subscriptions**

There are higher percentages of subscriptions to porn sites in zip codes that...

- Are more urban than rural.
- Have experienced an increase in higher than average household income.
- Have a great density of young people (age 15-24).
- Have a higher proportion of people with undergraduate degrees.
- Have higher measures of social capital (i.e. more people who donate blood, engage in volunteer activities, or participate in community projects).

69% of pay-per-view Internet content market is pornography.

32% of adult membership websites and 58% of free adult websites come from outside the U.S.

Global porn revenues have declined 50% since 2007 due to the amount of free porn online.

**Learn How to Renew Your Brain**

Porn use is glorified in today's mass media. But that doesn't change the fact that porn use is bad for us. In fact, numerous studies have proven that watching porn affects your brain.

**Porn in the Church**

Pornography is prevalent everywhere today. In fact, one in eight online searches is for pornography. Because porn use thrives in secrecy, many church members are trapped in a cycle of sin and shame, thinking that they're the only ones facing this temptation.

51% of pastors say Internet pornography is a possible temptation.

50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography.

75% of pastors do not make themselves accountable to anyone for their Internet use.

Regular church attendees are 26% less likely to look at porn; however, self-identified "fundamentalists" are 91% more likely to look at porn.

**Porn and Your Teens**

"Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible by so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions."

- U.S. Department of Justice

Research reveals many systemic effects of Internet pornography that are undermining an already vulnerable culture of marriage and family. Even more disturbing is the fact that the first Internet generations have not reached full maturity, so the upper limits of this impact have yet to be realized"

- Jill Manning, Sociologist

**Porn and Your Teens Stats. Did you know...**

- 9 out of 10 boys were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.
- The first exposure to pornography among men is 12 years old.
- 71% of teens hide online behavior from their parents.
- 28% of 16-17 year olds have been unintentionally exposed to porn online.
- 20% of 16-year-olds have received a sext and 30% of 17-year-olds have received a sext.

**On average...**

- 6 out of 10 girls were exposed to pornography before the age of 18.
- 15% of boys and 9% of girls have seen child pornography.
- 32% of boys and 18% of girls have seen bestiality online.
- 39% of boys and 23% of girls have seen sexual bondage online.
- 83% of boys and 57% of girls have seen group sex online.
- 69% of boys and 55% of girls have seen same-sex intercourse online.

**Porn and Young Adults**

Today, 68% of young adult men and 18% of women use porn at least once every week. Another 17% and another 30% of women use porn 1-2 times per month. This means for 85% of young men and nearly half of young women, watching porn is at least a monthly activity.

It is also becoming more common for young adults to make their own pornography. Nearly 1 in 5 of 18-24-year-olds have sent a sext (sexually explicit text message). This has become a predictor of sexual behavior. Students who have had sexual intercourse are five times more likely than virgins to be involved in sexting.

**Porn and Young Adults Stats**

- 51% of male and 32% of female students first viewed porn before their teenage years (12 and younger).
- 64% of college men and 18% of college women spend time online for Internet sex every week.
- 67% of young men and 49% of young women say viewing porn is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality.
- Politically liberal people are 19% more likely to look at porn.

68% of young adult men and 18% of women use porn at least once every week.

19% of 18-24 year-olds have sent a sext.

Student who have had sexual intercourse are five times more likely than virgins to be involved in sexting.

**Rewire your brain in 90 days**

Science shows how porn taps our neurochemistry to produce cravings, obsessions, and even addiction. Discover why it's so easy to start a porn habit and why it's so hard to stop. This e-book shows how the brain can be rewired in 90 days so that porn habits are left behind in exchange for new and healthy living.

**Porn and Your Marriage**

"I have also seen in my clinical experience that pornography damages the sexual performance of the viewers. Pornography viewers tend to have problems with premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. Having spent so much time in unnatural sexual experiences with paper, celluloid and cyberspace, they seem to find it difficult to have sex with a real human being. Pornography is raising their expectation and demand for types and amounts of sexual experiences; at the same time it is reducing their ability to experience sex."  
- Dr. MaryAnne Layden

**Porn and Your Marriage Stats**

Healthy Relationships provide...

Happily married men are 61% less likely to look at porn.

Those with teen children are 45% less likely to look at porn.

However, if you live in an unhappy marriage you are...

68% of divorce cases involved one party meeting a new lover over the Internet.

56% of divorce cases involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.

Men are more than 543% more likely to look at porn than women.

70% of wives of sex addicts could be diagnosed with PTSD.

Those who have ever engaged in paid sex are 270% more likely to look at porn.

Those who have ever committed adultery are 218% more likely to look at porn.

**Healing for Marriages Wrecked by Porn**

Since more than half of divorce cases involve one party's obsession with Internet porn, chances are good that someone you know is going through a rough time in their marriage. They may not know where to turn or even how to handle their emotions.

## Help for Adults

Good intentions are often not enough. Most people need a friend or mentor to help them escape temptations online.

When Covenant Eyes Internet Accountability is installed on your computer, smartphone, or tablet, it monitors how the Internet is used and sends a report to a friend you choose. This allows you to be open about your Internet use and talk about the temptations you face online with a friend.

## Parental Controls

As a parent, Covenant Eyes provides a report showing how the Internet is used, and it blocks sites dangerous to your kids. You can even use our software to turn off your kids' Internet access at a specific time of the night and limit the amount of time they use the Internet each day.

Internet Accountability reports open wide the doors to your children's interests and the dangers they face online. After all, 67% of kids say they hide their Internet use from their parents.

**Best website for Rosary resources:**

**[www.Fatima.org](http://www.Fatima.org)**

*For family matters:*

<https://sites.google.com/site/catholicmarriageandtradition/>

*Mary leads us to Her Divine Son, JESUS, hence to the True Mass:*

[sanctamissa.org](http://sanctamissa.org)

***Best place to study the One True Religion:***

[www.radioreplies.info](http://www.radioreplies.info)

[catholicapologetics.info](http://catholicapologetics.info)

[drbo.org](http://drbo.org)

[olrl.org](http://olrl.org)

Find your nearest Traditional Latin Mass here: **[sspx.org](http://sspx.org)**

Or call 1 203 431 0201

