

CHASTITY

All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has “put on Christ,” the model for all chastity. All Christ’s faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life. At the moment of his Baptism, the Christian is pledged to lead his affective life in chastity. (*CCC*, #2348)

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 a woman. The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift. (*CCC*, #2337)

Knowledge must then lead to education in self-control: hence the absolute necessity for the virtue of chastity and for permanent education in it. In the Christian view, chastity by no means signifies rejection of human sexuality or lack of esteem for it: rather it signifies spiritual energy capable of defending love from the perils of selfishness and aggressiveness, and able to advance it towards its full realization. (*FC*, #33)

Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom. The alternative is clear: either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy. (*CCC*, #2339)

Charity is the form of all the virtues. Under its influence, chastity appears as a school of the gift of the person. Self-mastery is ordered to the gift of self. Chastity leads him who practices it to become a witness to his neighbor of God’s fidelity and loving kindness. (*CCC*, #2346)

People should cultivate [chastity] in the way that is suited to their state of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others live in the way prescribed for all by the moral law, whether they are married or single. Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practice chastity in continence. (*CCC*, #2349)

Those who are engaged to marry are called to live in continence. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and hope of receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love. They will help each other grow in chastity. (*CCC*, #2350)

Chastity is the joyous affirmation of someone who knows how to live self-giving, free from any form of self-centered slavery. The chaste person is not self-centered, not involved in selfish relationships with other people. Chastity makes the personality

harmonious. It matures it and fills it with inner peace. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #17)

With the grace of Christ, flowing from his spousal love for the Church, everyone can live chastely even if they find themselves in unfavorable circumstances. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #19)

In order to live chastely, man and woman need the continuous illumination of the Holy Spirit. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #21)

[With regard to situations where 'heroic continence' is called for:] It is obvious that he who does not want to master himself, will not be able to do so; and he who thinks he can master himself, relying solely on his own powers and not sincerely and perseveringly seeking divine aid, will be miserably deceived. (Pius XII, *Allocution to Midwives*, October 29, 1951)

The more the faithful appreciate the value of chastity and its necessary role in their lives as men and women, the better they will understand, by a kind of spiritual instinct, its moral requirements and counsels. In the same way they will know better how to accept and carry out, in a spirit of docility to the Church's teaching, what an upright conscience dictates in concrete cases. (CDF, *Persona humana*, December 29, 1975, XI)

The faithful of the present time, and indeed today more than ever, must use the means which have always been recommended by the Church for living a chaste life. These means are: discipline of the senses and the mind, watchfulness and prudence in avoiding occasions of sin, the observance of modesty, moderation in recreation, wholesome pursuits, assiduous prayer and frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Young people especially should earnestly foster devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God, and take as examples the lives of saints and other faithful people, especially young ones, who excelled in the practice of chastity. (CDF, *Persona humana*, December 29, 1975, XII)

It is important in particular that everyone should have a high esteem for the virtue of chastity, its beauty and its power of attraction. This virtue increases the human person's dignity and enables him to love truly, disinterestedly, unselfishly and with respect for others. (CDF, *Persona humana*, December 29, 1975, XII)

Only a person who knows how to be chaste will know how to love in marriage or in virginity. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #68)

The practice of decency and modesty in speech, action and dress is very important for creating an atmosphere suitable to the growth of chastity, but this must be well motivated

by respect for one's own body and the dignity of others. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #56)

Chastity is the spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression. To the degree that a person weakens chastity, his or her love becomes more and more selfish, that is, satisfying a desire for pleasure and no longer self-giving. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #16)

Fidelity expresses constancy in keeping one's given word. God is faithful. The Sacrament of Matrimony enables man and woman to enter into Christ's fidelity for his Church. Through conjugal chastity, they bear witness to this mystery before the world. (CCC, #2365)

You know the duties of conjugal chastity. They exact a real courage, sometimes even heroic, and a filial Faith in Providence; but the grace of the Sacrament has been given you exactly that you may face these duties. Do not therefore be led astray by arguments unfortunately in vogue and by all too frequent disgraceful examples. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the Newlyweds*, December 6, 1939)

Parents should...consider any attack on the virtue and chastity of their children as an offense against the life of faith itself that threatens and impoverishes their own communion of life and grace (Ep 6:12). (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #22)

Parents who carry out their own right and duty to form their children for chastity can be certain that they are helping them in turn to build stable and united families, thus anticipating, insofar as this is possible, the joys of paradise. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #33)

If children and young people experience the effects of God's grace and mercy in the sacraments, they will be capable of living chastity well, as a gift of God, for his glory and in order to love him and other people. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #74)

An undisciplined or spoilt child is inclined toward a certain immaturity and moral weakness in future years because chastity is difficult to maintain if a person develops selfish or disordered habits and cannot behave with proper concern and respect for others. Parents should present objective standards of what is right and wrong, thereby creating a sure moral framework for life. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #86)

It is wise for the teacher to insist clearly on the commandment as such, with all the

gravity and seriousness that attaches to it as a divine precept. At the same time, he [the teacher] should not avoid pointing out to youth the fine qualities of purity, in order that the young may be led to love it and desire it for its own sake. Thus they will be spurred on to avoid proximate occasions of sin. They will be strengthened in the struggle, whose difficulty will not be concealed from them. They will be induced to embrace courageously the sacrifices which virtue demands. They will be encouraged not to run the danger of laying down their arms and surrendering without a fight to perverse habits. (Pius XII, *Allocution to Members of Italian Catholic Action*, March 23, 1952)

Impress upon the consciences of young people the genuine concept of liberty, true liberty, liberty worth of and proper to a creature made in the image of God. This liberty is quite another thing from dissolution and unrestraint. It is a proven fitness for good; it consists in deciding what one's duty is and then doing it; it is the mastery of one's own faculties and instincts, and of the situations in which one lives. (Pius XII, *Allocution to Members of Italian Catholic Action*, March 23, 1952)

Teach youth to pray and to draw from the founts of Penance and the Most Holy Eucharist what nature cannot provide: the strength not to fall, the power to rise again. Make them feel while they are still young that without the aid of these supernatural energies, they will never succeed in being either good Christians or even simply honest men, whose reward is a life of serenity. (Pius XII, *Allocution to Members of Italian Catholic Action*, March 23, 1952)

In the light of the Redemption and how adolescents and young people are formed, the virtue of chastity is found within temperance — a cardinal virtue elevated and enriched by grace in baptism. So chastity is not to be understood as a repressive attitude. On the contrary, chastity should be understood rather as the purity and temporary stewardship of a precious and rich gift of love, in view of the self-giving realized in each person's specific vocation. Chastity is thus that "spiritual energy capable of defending love from the perils of selfishness and aggressiveness, and able to advance it towards its full realization (FC 33)." (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #4)

In the framework of educating the young person for self-realization and self-giving, formation for chastity implies the collaboration first and foremost of the parents, as is the case with formation for the other virtues such as temperance, fortitude and prudence. Chastity cannot exist as a virtue without the capacity to renounce self, to make sacrifices and to wait. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #5)

Through this *remote formation for chastity in the family*, adolescents and young people learn to live sexuality in its personal dimension, rejecting any kind of separation of sexuality from love — understood as self-giving — and any separation of the love between husband and wife from the family. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #32)

If in fact parents do not give adequate formation in chastity, they are failing in their precise duty. Likewise, they would also be guilty were they to tolerate immoral or inadequate formation being given to their children outside the home. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #44)

The good example and leadership of parents is essential in strengthening the formation of young people in chastity. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #59)

Formation in chastity and timely information regarding sexuality must be provided in the broadest context of education for love. It is not sufficient, therefore, to provide information about sex together with objective moral principles. Constant help is also required for the growth of children's *spiritual life*, so that the biological development and impulses they begin to experience will always be accompanied by a growing love of God, the Creator and Redeemer, and an ever greater awareness of the dignity of each human person and his or her body. In the light of the mystery of Christ and the Church, parents can illustrate the positive values of human sexuality in the context of the person's original vocation to love and the universal call to holiness. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #70)

In particular, there is a need for education about the value of life from its very origins. It is an illusion to think that we can build a true culture of human life if we do not help the young to accept and experience sexuality and love and the whole of life according to their true meaning and in their close interconnection. Sexuality, which enriches the whole person, "manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love." The trivialization of sexuality is among the principal factors which have led to contempt for new life. Only a true love is able to protect life. There can be no avoiding the duty to offer, especially to adolescents and young adults, an authentic education in sexuality and in love, an education which involves training in chastity as a virtue which fosters personal maturity and makes one capable of respecting the "spousal" meaning of the body. (EV, #97)