

DEADLY SINS—LIVING VIRTUE

Lust

Creation of Man and Woman

- In the Image of God
- In the Likeness of God
- Male and Female
 - *complementarity*: “Man and woman were made ‘for each other’” (CCC 372)
 - equal as persons
 - sexual identity and complementarity are oriented toward a gift of self

Conjugal Union (CCC 2362–63)

- marriage act is noble and honorable
- sexuality is a source of joy and pleasure
- spouses’ union achieves the twofold end of marriage:
 - the good of the spouses themselves
 - and the transmission of life.
- These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple’s spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family.

Conjugal Fidelity (CCC 2364)

- Both give themselves definitively and totally to one another. They are no longer two; from now on they form one flesh.
- The covenant they freely contracted imposes on the spouses the obligation to preserve it as unique and indissoluble.
- By its very nature conjugal love requires the inviolable fidelity of the spouses. This is the consequence of the gift of themselves which they make to each other.

The Fruitfulness of Marriage (CCC 2366)

- Fecundity is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful.
- It is necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered per se to the procreation of human life.

Effects of Original Sin on Sexuality

- union of man and woman has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination; infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation. (CCC 407)

- As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. (CCC 1607)
- redeeming work of Christ restores sexuality and marriage to their original significance

Chastity (CCC 2337 ff.)

- the successful integration of sexuality within the person
- virtue of chastity therefore involves
 - the integrity of the person
 - and the integrality of the gift.
- includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom.

Offenses against Chastity (CCC 2351 ff.)

- *Lust*: a disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes.
 - represents . . . an intentional reduction, almost a restriction or closing down of the horizon of mind and heart. (ToB)
 - obscures the significance of the body, of the person itself.
 - does not correspond to the union or personal communion to which man and woman were mutually called from the beginning
 - reduces sex, and man himself, to a commodity (DCE, 5)
- *Masturbation*: sexual pleasure is sought outside of “the sexual relationship which is demanded by the moral order and in which the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love is achieved.”
- *Pornography* perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world.
- *Fornication*: carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman.
- *Adultery*: marital infidelity. Christ condemns even adultery of mere desire (Mt 5:27-28).
- The Church also condemns more serious offenses and crimes against chastity as gravely and intrinsically immoral actions.
 - *prostitution*
 - *rape*
 - *incest*
 - *sexual abuse of children*

Openness to Life (CCC 2368 ff.)

- each and every marriage act remain ordered per se to the procreation of human life
- based on the inseparable connection between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act.
- regulation of procreation
 - For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children.
 - 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.
 - Should conform their behavior to the objective criteria of morality.
 - Periodic continence is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality.

- contraception
 - “Every action which . . . proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible” is intrinsically evil.
 - The innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, by contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other.
 - This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality. (FC 32)

Homosexuality (CCC 2357 ff.)

- Tradition has always declared that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.”
 - They are contrary to the natural law.
 - They close the sexual act to the gift of life.
 - They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity.
- This inclination . . . constitutes for most [people with same-sex attraction] a trial.
- Homosexual persons must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity.
- Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.
- Homosexual persons are called to chastity.

Chastity (CCC 2340 ff.)

- accomplished through
 - self-knowledge,
 - practice of an asceticism adapted to the situations that confront him,
 - obedience to God’s commandments,
 - exercise of the moral virtues,
 - and fidelity to prayer.
- All the baptized are called to chastity
 - married people are called to live conjugal chastity
 - others practice chastity in continence.
- struggle against concupiscence (CCC 2520)
 - by the virtue and gift of chastity
 - by purity of intention which consists in seeking the true end of man
 - by purity of vision, external and internal; by discipline of feelings and imagination; by refusing all complicity in impure thoughts
 - by prayer.
- Purity requires modesty, an integral part of temperance. (CCC 2521–23)
 - protects the intimate center of the person.
 - guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them
 - encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships
 - inspires one’s choice of clothing
 - keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity
 - modesty of the feelings as well as of the body
 - inspires a way of life which makes it possible to resist the allurements of fashion and the pressures of prevailing ideologies.

In temptations against purity (*Spiritual Combat*, ch. 19)

1. Avoid the occasion of sin. Avoid idleness.
2. Do not presume your own strength. Never judge others in similar struggles.
3. Do not over-analyze the temptations. Direct attention peacefully elsewhere.
4. Above all, turn to Christ. Have confidence in his ability and his desire to help.
5. Stay faithful to prayer and the sacraments.
 - “Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”
 - “O God, come to my assistance; Lord, make haste to help me”
 - “Create a clean heart in me, O God.”
 - Confession
 - don’t put off going to confession after a fall
 - keep the same confessor
 - lay open all our thoughts
 - keep nothing hidden in ourselves
 - accuse ourselves of our worst sins first

Humility

- one of the most efficacious means of keeping chaste
 - have compassion for those who fall through their frailty
 - never to boast in the least of being free
 - acknowledge that whatever we have is from the mercy of God.
- chastity has laws of growth which progress through stages marked by imperfection and too often by sin.

Friendship (CCC 2347)

- The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship.
- friendship represents a great good for all
- leads to spiritual communion.
- friendship in the communion of saints

I urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.

Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

(Romans 12:1–2.)

The body is not for [sexual] immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body.

(1 Corinthians 6:13–14; 19–20.)

Suggestions for Further Reading

Benedict XVI. Encyclical Letter on Christian Love (*Deus caritas est*, 25 December 2005).

Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Male and Female He Created Them” (nn. 369–373); “The Sacrament of Matrimony” (nn. 1601–1666); “The Sixth Commandment” (nn. 2331–2400); “The Ninth Commandment” (nn. 2514–2533).

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Declaration on Certain Problems of Sexual Ethics (*Persona humana*, 29 December 1975).

St. John Cassian. The Institutes. Book Six: “The Spirit of Fornication”. Translated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, Number 58. New York: The Newman Press, 2000.

St. John Climacus. The Ladder of Divine Ascent. Step Fifteen: “On Chastity”. Translated by Colm Lubheid and Norman Russell. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982.

John Paul II. Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (*Familiaris consortio*, 22 November 1981).

John Paul II. Letter to Families (2 February 1994).

John Paul II. Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan. Especially “Blessed Are the Pure in Heart” (pp. 103–190) and “Reflections on *Humanae Vitae*” (pp. 386–426). Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997.

Lewis, C.S. The Four Loves. [First published 1960.] San Diego: Harvest, 1991.

Lewis, C.S. Mere Christianity, Book Three, Chapter Five: “Sexual Morality”, and Chapter Six: “Christian Marriage”. [First published 1952.] San Francisco: Harper, 2000.

Lewis, C.S. The Screwtape Letters, especially Letters 18, 19 and 20. [First published 1942.] San Francisco: Harper, 2000.

Paul VI. Encyclical Letter on the Regulation of Births (*Humanae vitae*, 25 July 1968).

Please refer also to the general reading list provided with the course outline.