

A circular image showing a dirt path winding through a forest with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. In the center of the path stands a simple wooden cross. The scene is framed by a thin black border.

James 1:12-21

**Castus  
Society**  
"A path to fidelity"

**James 1:12-21**

*Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.*

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.*

*Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death.*

*Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

*Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Know this, my beloved brethren.*

*Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God.*

*Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*



*This Booklet is dedicated  
to our patrons*



*St. Thomas Aquinas*



*St. John Paul II*

*The purpose of this booklet is meant to be a help aid for  
those who are willing to amend their lives, to  
be the gift in life that God intended  
for them to be.  
The fulfillment of this desire is not possible  
without prayer.  
Please pray for them.*

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# *Prayer for Knowledge And Discernment*

*Loving Father, we stand before You  
in the midst of confusion and complexities of life.  
Our futures sometimes seem distant and unknown.  
Give us, O Lord, the vision to see the path  
You have set before us.*

*We thank you for all that have gone before us.  
We beg You to give us real understanding of what we need,  
that we in turn may put these precepts into practice.  
We pray that they may touch our lives and amend our spirits  
that we may be blessings in the lives of  
those we meet in our walk.*

*Grant us the courage to follow Your way, that through  
the gifts and talents You have given us,  
We may bring Your life and Your love to others.  
We ask that these words be not just signs on a page  
but channels of grace into our hearts.*

*Amen.*



James 1: 12-21

# Castus Society

The Castus Society is a fellowship dedicated to the advancement of chastity not only for ourselves but also for all of society. We believe that in sharing our experiences, our strengths and our hopes with each other. We may help ourselves and others to live a chaste life. Castus is a Catholic fellowship and supports and upholds all that the Catholic Church teaches.

Castus does not engage in any controversy nor does it endorse or oppose any other cause. The Castus Society relies only on the generosity of its members for support. Our only requirement for membership is our personal desire to live a chaste life that is in harmony with our vocations and to help others to achieve the same. *St. Joseph, pray for us.*

***Our Mission Statement Or “The Purpose Of The Castus Society”*** As a fellowship we are dedicated to the advancement of chastity, not only for ourselves but also for all of society. We believe that the responsibility lies in us individually and then in our unity as Children of God. Our desire to live out and to carry the message of chastity in our hearts and in our homes is only enhanced by the unity of our fellowship. We rely on the fellowship for support and encouragement, knowing that the mission we have taken on is an arduous and unending journey. That it will not only demand of us our time, but our talents and treasures as well. This also will require rigorous honesty of us and complete accountability to the fellowship, as well as to all those we meet each and every day. The Castus Society meets on a regular basis to encourage and support chastity. We are not group counseling but are committed to all who have a desire to enhance the quality and consistency of their chastity, no matter how far down the moral scale they have gone. The fellowship’s common bond and support of our on going commitment to our knowledge and the understanding of chastity will be there for us, our families and our communities. Although we share this common bond, we meet separately as men and women of God. This is to give us the opportunity to enhance our God given differences. To help us to truly be the compliment to each other that God intended us to be.

We pledge that each and every day we will pray for God's grace to accomplish our chosen and appointed tasks to serve the purpose and desires of the Castus Society and the needs of those entrusted to us.

# *“CHASTITY”*

What is chastity or living a chaste life? The long term view and acceptable myth is that it is about not having sex or not having sexual relations under the wrong conditions. To some of us this might give a misleading impression as to where that would leave the role of sex in our lives. First, let us look at its etymology and what Webster says about “Chastity”.

Etymology: The words "chaste" and "chastity" stem from the Latin adjective *Castus* meaning "pure". The words entered the English language around the middle of the 13th century; at that time, they meant slightly different things. "Chaste" meant "virtuous or pure from unlawful sexual intercourse" (referring to extramarital sex), while "chastity" meant "virginity". It was not until the late 16th century that the two words came to have the same basic meaning as a related adjective and noun.

According to Webster: “Chastity” refers to the sexual behavior of a man or woman acceptable to the moral standards and guidelines of a culture, civilization or religion. In the Western world, the term has become closely associated (and is often used interchangeably) with sexual abstinence, especially before marriage. However, the term remains applicable to persons in all states, single or married, clerical or lay, and has implications beyond sexual temperance.

Chastity needs to become more than our antiquated textbook view of what we perceive it to be when we say, “We want to live a chaste life”. Chastity is not just a description of whether or not we have sex or whether or not we are monogamous or even if we are celibate. Chastity is part of the celebration of God’s gift of life in harmony with our vocations, whether we are single, married, or religious. How we celebrate, our chastity directly connects to our vocations and our vocations are the basis for which we understand its meaning to be in each of our lives.

Over the years, we have walked away from our understanding of what it is to be chaste. Some of us have even run from it so that we could be as self-indulgent as we like. At times, we don’t even acknowledge the responsibility we have to those in our lives, whether they are here by our choices in life or by Godly imposition on us. Nevertheless, these are souls, for which we are responsible. Our stewardship of these gifts has been nothing less than wanting.

Chastity is not just a word or even just a burden from God; it is a way of life. Webster was so accurate when he stated, “the term remains applicable to persons in all states, single or married, clerical or lay, and has implications beyond sexual temperance.”

To the married man the sound of sexual temperance may leave him bewildered. He doesn't understand the idea of what it is to have complete fidelity in the relationship, forsaking all else that could distract him from living a fulfilling yet chaste life with his blushing bride, and yes with God's blessing his loving family.

For the single man with the hopes of one day having a family, sexual temperance includes complete abstinence until after marriage. The concept of waiting seems so foreign to most. They cannot grasp the idea of self-denial let alone worry about the spiritual and emotional needs of those they supposedly love, or in some cases, those for whom they just have desire.

For most men our desire or chosen vocation is to have a woman in our life, someone to hold dear, or cherish, a mate to share our life. We do not understand the importance of chastity and the role it plays in all aspects of our lives. How it affects our wives, daughters, sons, sisters, brothers, friends, foes, yes, everyone in our lives. Our obligation to demonstrate chastity is endless.

We so easily forget that God is always with us, even when we think we are alone. Oh, how often do we forget to apologize to God, the Holy Spirit and our Guardian Angel for our indiscretions, big or small? Too many times have I had to say at the end of the day “Lord, forgive me for not being a better steward of your gifts”. Remember that the honorable man does what is honorable even when no one else is around.

The best example and lesson is “Lord, help me to guard my eyes”. I am confident that most of us do not realize what a great blessing this simple action can be and how great the consequences are from ignoring this action. We walk through our days so often not giving any credence to the images we take in. Every glimpse, every backward glance, every purposeful lingering look burns an image into our vast memory bank.

When these opportunities are presented to us, we do not stop and think about whether or not we should afford them to ourselves, or whether or not we are entitled to them.



## ***Sexual Fidelity***

To facilitate the propagation of the human race, God has attached a certain pleasure to the acts whereby man reproduces himself. *This pleasure is permissible only to married people and only when they use it in the way God intended and for the purpose for which He intended.* Original sin has introduced disorders into the instinct of self-propagation as it did in the other powers of man. As a result, this instinct of reproduction continually seeks to free itself from the control of the will and to satisfy itself in immoral ways. These inordinate tendencies create for us special problems of self-control and self-mastery.

***What is lust?*** Lust is an inordinate desire for sexual pleasure. What does "inordinate" mean? Simply put, it means "out of order." When we divert anything from the purpose for which it was intended by God, it is disordered. The malice of lust consists in an excessive attachment to sexual pleasure for the married, or the deliberate indulgence of sexual acts and pleasures for those who are unmarried. Lust is one of the seven deadly sins because it is so alluring that people will commit a wide variety of sins because of it. When a person is lost to lust, this disorder affects the faculties of the soul—the intellect and the will—in the following ways.

Regarding the intellect, man's understanding, which should tell him whether or not something is good and therefore should be pursued, is afflicted by blindness which closes the mind to every good except sexual pleasure. People often wonder how a grown man could sexually abuse a child, but lust (as with all serious sin) darkens the intellect and keeps the lust addict in denial about the seriousness of his sexual sin. The act of judgment is upset by thoughtlessness whereby a person excludes any means to do what has to be done except those which lead to sexual pleasure. Thus a lust addict might neglect his duties towards his family in pursuit of acting out sexually, all the while denying the negative impact this behavior has on his wife and children. When a person is blinded by lust, he sees no evil. Regarding the will, lust results in inordinate self-love because of catering to one's disordered passions, which eventually tend toward a rejection of God or of the Church which is regarded as an obstacle to one's self indulgence. Secondly, lust results in inordinate attachment to this world, which often leads a person to despair of the world to come. If, we can see how lust can destroy a person's

humanity and reduce him to the level of an animal. We speak of man's inhumanity to man. Monstrous acts have been committed by those who have surrendered themselves to this deadly sin. A person can be so addicted to lust that it totally blinds the person to the heinousness of his actions. It should be obvious, however, that a person does not start out lusting in so monstrous a fashion. Lust begins in the heart.

***Internal acts of lust*** Internal acts of lust are thoughts or desires, which are not carried out in act; these internal sins are forbidden by the ninth commandment. External acts of lust are unchaste or impure deeds and words; these are forbidden by the sixth commandment. A Christian avoids impure thoughts not only because they are evil in themselves but also because all impure actions begin in the mind. A disciplined body comes from a disciplined mind. As one of the seven deadly sins, lust is something most individuals have to come to grips with.

***Escape from reality*** Finding life in this valley of tears unbearable, people are tempted to resort to all kinds of escapes. When a young person isn't taught how to deal with reality in a healthy way, he searches for something that seems to bring relief and comfort, something which is reliable and always there. This may be alcohol or drugs; for others it may be food; and for others, there is sexual gratification. Some people discover early in life that sexual arousal can be a pleasant drug used in order to medicate themselves and to escape reality. Once indulged, it means immediate addiction for many people, especially for young males. Sex becomes confused with comforting and nurturing. If a person marries without having overcome the addiction to lust, an unhappy sexual relationship in marriage often results and the person tends to use his spouse, which ultimately alienates them instead strengthening their bond.

Let's look at a few examples. A young man has a problem of lust through the use of pornography and masturbation, with periodic visits to a strip joint. When confronted with his lust addiction by the priest, he responds: "But Father, I'm getting married!" He's thinking: "I won't need porno or strip joints; I'll have my wife." Unfortunately, lust in marriage is never seen as an evil by the lust addict, and equally unfortunate is the fact that many spouses of sex addicts think that indulging their spouse's sexual fantasies in marriage is legitimate, even though the gut reaction may be one of

disgust with the lust addict's behavior. A young woman is in the Blessed Sacrament chapel praying, She asks if she could talk to the priest. Even though she had been married hardly a year, she was reluctant to go home. She recently had a miscarriage and needed to abstain from sexual intercourse for a while, but her husband would not hear of it. Some way or other he needed his fix and if she wouldn't oblige him, he would use it against her, by moody behavior, by not speaking, etc. "Sounds like your husband has a problem with lust," she's told. The following week she returns and says at one point, "You know, I never did like sex." She had lived with this man in a sexual relationship for five years before she decided she needed to return to church and live a moral life. And in that five-year sexual relationship, she never enjoyed sex. What she wasn't aware of is that most people involved with lust addicts don't enjoy sex either, because sex with a lust addict is simply being used for his gratification. It is not true intimacy. Lust precludes intimacy.

***The spouse of the addict*** If another woman is very uncomfortable because her husband demanded of her very bizarre sexual behavior which turned her stomach. She's told, "Your husband has a problem with lust and you're only feeding his addiction." "But I want to please him," she responds in her enabling voice. The next day her husband comes to see the priest and admits that he's already seeing prostitutes. His poor wife didn't have a clue. She merely wanted to please him: a codependent sexual relationship.

***Homosexual, bisexual, pedophilia?*** Recently a man who returned to the Catholic Church at the age of 34 spoke about his sexual addiction. His life was one of sex with women outside of marriage, pornography and masturbation, but in returning to the Church, he reformed. However, he was still masturbating. While visiting his best friend from high school, he picked up his friend's little daughter on his lap and was sexually aroused, and even tempted towards her. Fortunately, he didn't do anything to her. He came to see his parish priest and in anguish exclaimed, "What am I, a pedophile?" As a Catholic nourished by the teaching of the Saints and Church Fathers, I have never read anything from them on bisexuality, pedophilia, or homosexuality. As a result, I stay away from secular arguments about these issues and merely deal with the real issue: a lack of Chastity.

***The real issue: purity*** People, married, single, young and old, are called to a life of purity in mind and body. Why? Because man was created as a social being to exist in relationships with other persons in love. Love is our origin and love is our destiny. Lust, however, disturbs our relationships and distorts true love. It prohibits true intimacy in marriage and it keeps unmarried people from the intimate joy of nonsexual bonding. If a male is drawn to another male in affection, is that wrong? If the man mentioned above is drawn to his best friend's little daughter, is that wrong? A young child should be a delight to the soul; to hold her is the delight of human affection. But for the man who has a lust problem, a man who has never recovered from the habit of masturbation, such an attraction often becomes sexualized, whether the affective attraction is for the same sex, the opposite sex, or the child. This is the origin of pedophilia, bisexuality, homosexuality, and sexual abuse in marriage: a lack of Chastity. It may happen that a young boy loses his father at an early age and, unfortunately, never bonds with a father figure. Seeking comfort in masturbation as a teenager, and still in need of bonding with a father figure, his wires get crossed, so to speak, and he sexualizes the legitimate need for a man's affective attention. Someone has an attraction to children, loves- to be with children, a veritable pied-piper. There is nothing wrong with this - ability to relate to children and to enjoy their presence, but if the person has a problem with lust, then chances are he is going to sexualize his attraction to children. Likewise in marriage. Lust precludes intimacy. The young man referred to above, who is about to get married but is still masturbating and using pornography, is not wrong in seeking to be married. The problem is, because of his lust addiction, he is not capable of married intimacy. Lust precludes intimacy. Studies have shown that repeated exposure to pornography results in a decreased satisfaction with one's sexual partner and, like alcohol addiction, a person's tolerance level changes. The lust addict uses the partner for his own sexual gratification, whereas in a true Christian union, one gives oneself unreservedly to the other in true intimacy, and in the giving, one receives.

***Artificial birth control*** The use of artificial birth control often promotes the use of sex as a drug. Sex becomes a habit, and a habit becomes a need: I need a fix; sex is the drug. If a person who uses sex as a drug, i.e. out of compulsive need rather than love, has to delay

gratification, as he would if he were practicing natural birth control, he risks becoming irritable and unreasonable, placing the blame for his unhappiness on his uncooperative spouse. Unreasonable demands are placed on the marriage partner by a person who has never learned sexual sobriety. Blind to his lust, a person fails to understand his emotional dependency that often underlies the sexual. Marriage without Being Chaste yields to control, expectations, and need. The media is so ready to condemn the Church and make her appear irrelevant by quoting Catholics who neglect the Church's teaching on artificial birth control. Those people who practiced artificial birth control in their younger married years and now have lived long enough to see its damaging consequences for their marriage are never interviewed.

But a priest meets these people in parish after parish. Through experience, these couples have had the grace to recognize the deadly sin of lust in their marriage, something the worldly man or woman thinks an absurdity. Americans have seen the spouse of a sex addict go as a political agent throughout the world promoting the use of condoms and abortion, all the while married to a lust addict! The institutionalization of sex is something the Church has to work against, and because of it, the Church is regarded as the enemy. Today, the Church is a voice crying in the wilderness, while society experiences more and more the devastating effects of a culture addicted to sex.

***Institutionalized addiction*** Just how deadly the sin of lust is can be perceived in the statistics afforded us. It is said that one in ten middle aged women has been sexually abused as a child, - that one in five children, - from kindergarten to high school, - has been sexually molested. - If true, - such statistics reinforce what is implied from the mass media: - an enormous amount of sexual abuse is taking place in our contemporary culture. - Sexual addiction is becoming evermore in-stitutionalized despite the statistical warning. Sex is used to sell everything and rare is a movie that does not depict lust in a favorable light, whether between the married or the unmarried, the same sex or the opposite sex. And now our young, are being encouraged to use condoms at increasingly younger ages, are being given the not so subtle message that sex outside marriage is practically unavoidable. And women, who have for so long been the victims of such abuse, are actually promoting it by enabling their daughters to act out by

encouraging protection instead of forming their daughters to find men whose interest in them goes deeper than the sexual. Adults enable this behavior by saying, "They'll do it anyway."

In reality, if advertisement against smoking were working, why wouldn't it work against the abuse of sex? Is it because adults in our society are unwilling to give up the drug of lust themselves, just as we are unwilling to deny our eating and drinking habits and so have produced a nation wherein obesity is a major health problem, also among the young? There is no way to escape the need for self-discipline and delayed gratification.

***Nonsexual bonding*** It is not uncommon to meet young adults who have never experienced the deep in-ner- joy of nonsexual bonding. The person who grows in the virtue of chastity-being pure in mind and body-learns to touch non sexually and to have the deep and abiding human pleasure of nonsexual bonding, either with one's own sex or with the opposite sex, either with adults or with children. This is the warm human affection St. Peter and St. Paul encourage in the Christian heart (see Rom. 12:10; Phil 1:8; Phil 2:1; and 2 Pet. 1:7). Lust, however, precludes such non-sexual bonding and the relationship very often becomes sexualized. Sex addiction is just as obsessive compulsive as any other addiction. It, too, like alcoholism, is a disease of nature, as St. Augustine noted sixteen hundred years ago: "Sinful lust is not nature, but a disease of nature." This quote explains why AA refers to alcoholism as a disease. There are some who do not understand this description and even resent it, but it is not a new understanding. Such addictive behavior has been regarded since the days of the early Church as "diseased," as St. Augustine knew. Lust is, in truth, a disease of the soul: just as physical diseases can destroy the body, so the seven deadly sins are lethal to the soul. Just as a few beers no longer satisfy the alcoholic, so too with the lust addict: he increases his acting out. Masturbation is regarded by the secular world to be harmless, yet in reality it turns a person in on himself, increasing his inability to bond non-sexually with others, including the spouse.

***Masturbation and Chastity*** C.S. Lewis gave the following response to a young man who asked him about masturbation: "For me the real evil of masturbation would be that it takes an appetite which, in lawful use, leads the individual out of himself to complete his own



personality in that of another and turns it back; sends the man back into the prison of himself, there to keep a harem of imaginary brides. "And this harem, once admitted, works against his ever getting out and really uniting with a real woman. *For the harem is: always accessible, always subservient, calls for no sacrifices or adjustments, and can be endowed with erotic and psychological attractions which no real woman can rival. Among those shadowy brides, he is: always adored, always the perfect love, no demand is made on his unselfishness, no mortification ever imposed on his vanity. In the end, they become merely the medium through which he increasingly adores himself.*"

Sinful lust fosters escapism and the inability to relate to real people. Wherein, then, lies a remedy? Like any addiction, sex addiction has a terrible grip upon its victim who is powerless to overcome it. Listen to what one of the early desert monks John Climacus, 6th century, North Africa says about it in his treatise on the spiritual life: "*Do not imagine that you will overcome the demon of lust by entering into an argument with him. Wounded nature is on the devil's side and he has the best argument. So the man who decides to struggle against his flesh and to overcome it by his own efforts is fighting in vain. The truth is that unless the Lord overturns the house of the flesh and builds the house of the soul, the man wishing to overcome it has watched and fasted in vain. Surrender by offering up to the Lord the weakness of your nature.*"

Jesus taught the Samaritan woman who, after five husbands, was in her sixth relationship, that her thirst was really for the living water and that "whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (Jn 4:14). Man's thirst should lead him to God.

The recovering lust addict has learned to pray with St. Augustine, "***Lord, help me to find in you what I was looking for in lust,***" for in reality his thirst was a thirst for the living God, who alone can satiate.

In the late seventies, Support groups were born out of the experiences of people addicted to lust. Lust is essentially a spiritual problem and it calls for a spiritual solution. As stressed by Christ, healing comes to an individual when he gathers with others (Matt 18:20).



# Triggers

## What are they?

Triggers are the first cause of our mental response to take us down a chosen path; Above all, we need to remember that it is our choice, our free will, as to which fork in the path we take.

### *Where do they come from?*

Triggers can be anything: sounds, smells, visions, thoughts, or a combination of any of these stimuli. We all have what can so easily be referred to as the witching hour- that time each day that we are the most vulnerable to Satan's influence.

***How do they affect me?*** That depends on YOU! We can all suffer from or be subject to desires in life. Our choice at this point is: Do we succumb To them or do we turn our will to the care of God?

### ***What can I do to change how they affect me?***

We are so used to our self-indulgent attitude that we often give into Satan's prodding without regard to the consequences. Keep in mind that these are merely triggers and they don't have to define our actions, let alone control our thought processes.

### ***What can I do to keep them at bay?***

Changing our response to them is the key. For example, when we are at mass, a sound could catch our attention. Instead of moving our focus to the source of the sound, we should immerse myself deeper in prayer. We have to make a choice to institute a change.

### ***When they do affect me, what is my recourse?***

Change the situation and call/text someone, ANYONE! Remember that our best laid plans and thoughts are what brought us here! If we do not ask for help with our struggles, we cannot receive help.

Remember Each and Every day to ***“Put on the Whole Armor of God”***



## *The* **“Via Castitatis”**

*An adaptation of “How it works” From  
Chapter 5 of the big book*

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not amend their lives are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually those who are incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous

honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do change if they have the capacity to be honest.

The experiences we share disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it.... then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked; we thought we could find an easier softer way; but we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with our sinfulness, our human weakness! Without help, it's too much for us. There is One who has all power, that One is God. May you find him now!

Half measures avail us nothing. We stood at the turning point; we asked for God's protection and care with complete abandon.

*Here is the path we've taken to live the chaste life:*

1. We admitted that we are powerless and that our lives are unmanageable. *The Lord tells us " My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness "* 2Corinthians 12:8

2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, that God through his Son our Savior Jesus Christ could make us whole again. *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me: for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden light."* Matthew 11:29

3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *"Trust in the lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and He shall direct your path."* Proverbs 3:5-6

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of our lives. *"The causes of evil are not found outside man, but above all, in the depths of his heart. Consequently, Christians must rebel against the debasing of man, through a sincere determination to be truly converted themselves and must show forth in their own lives the joy of being truly free from sin."* John Paul II

5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our sins. *Lord your gift in the sacrament of confession has lightened our burden. "Therefore we confess our sins to one another; and pray for one another that we may be healed"* James 5:12

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. *"Put off the old man who is corrupted according to the desires of error; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man who, according to God, is created in justice and the holiness of truth."* Ephesians

7. We humbly asked God to remove all our shortcomings. *"Create a clean heart in me O Lord, Renew within me a resolute spirit."* Psalms 51:10

8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. *Therefore leave your gift at the altar and go and first be reconciled with your brother.* Matthew 5:24  
*For "No one heals himself by wounding another."* St. Ambrose

9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. *“So let us also while we are still in this world, repent with our whole heart of the evil things we have done in the flesh, that we may be saved by the Lord while we have time for repentance. For after leaving this world, we cannot confess or repent any more.”* St. Clement

10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we are wrong, we promptly admit it and accept accountability. *“The life of a man reaches fulfillment through the succession of deaths.”* St. Basil

11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, through his Son, Jesus Christ, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

*“ No longer do I call you slaves for the slave does not know what the master is doing; but I call you friend for all that I have heard from My father I have made known to you”* John 15:15

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we are committed to carrying this message to all of God’s children, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. *“ For we were called to freedom brethren: only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, be of service to one another.”* Galatians 5:13

*“When you come to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare your soul for temptation. Humble your heart, and endure: listen, and receive the words of understanding: do not be alarmed when disaster comes. Wait on God with patience: join yourself to God, and endure, that your life may be increased in the latter end. Take all that shall be brought upon you: and in your sorrow endure, and in your humiliation keep patient. For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.”* Sirach 2:1-5

This is a long and winding path. Do not be discouraged! No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We know that we are not always saintly. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. Our personal experiences before and after we have turned our will and our lives over to God, make clear three pertinent ideas:

That we are struggling and we cannot manage our own lives.

That probably no human power could have taken away our weaknesses.

That God could, and would, if He were sought!



# ***THE PROMISES***

The freedom we gain from living a life of fidelity in our walk with God will give us a new happiness.

The past will no longer hold us captive, nor will we forget the scars it left on our lives.

We will come to know and understand the word  
*“Serenity”*

We will know peace in Christ Jesus.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

Charity will replace our selfishness, self-pity will disappear and we will have a new sense of purpose.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Confidence in our new relationship with Christ Jesus and our fellow man will replace our fears and insecurity will leave us.

Integrity in thought and action will be our guide, as we will intuitively know how to handle situations, which used to baffle us.

Our new awareness of God working in our lives will give us the courage to abandon our will to his and to see the glory of what he has for us.

All of these promises are being fulfilled among us. In time, we will see them materialize if we work through Jesus Christ to amend our lives to the will of God.





## *The Traditions*

Our common hope for fidelity in life should come first; our personal goal to live and encourage a chaste life depends upon unity.

For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority: *Our loving God*. Our leaders are but trusted servants.

Castus is a Catholic Fellowship. We are dedicated and committed to follow, support, and abide by all that the Catholic Church teaches.

Our only requirement is a desire to live a chaste life.

Our groups should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Castus as a whole and are self-supporting through our own contributions.

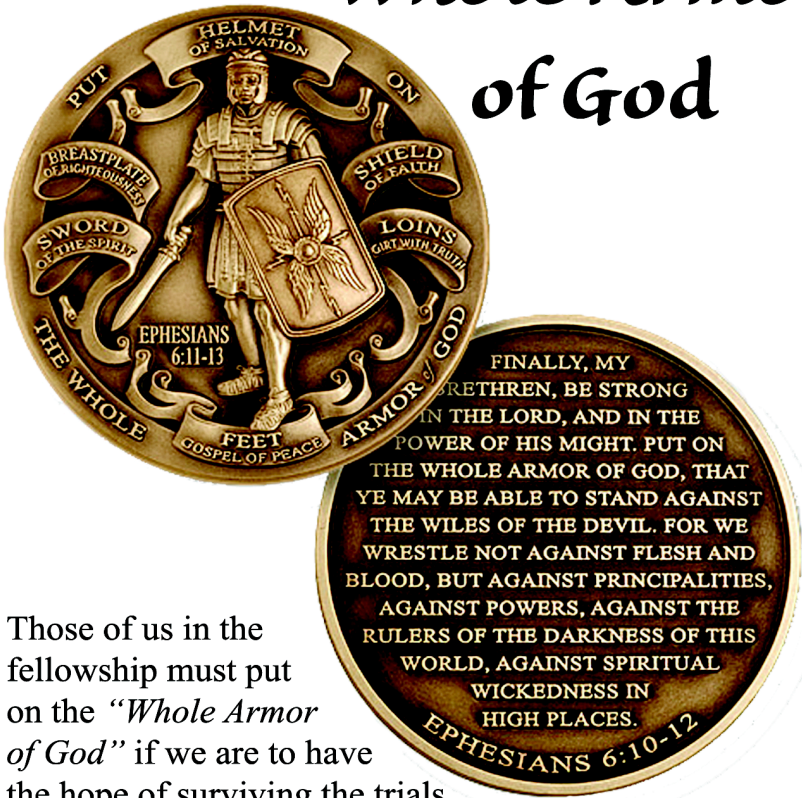
Each group has but one primary purpose: To foster chastity; by encouraging and living a chaste life according to our vocations and helping others to achieve the same.

Castus does not wish to have anything divert us from our primary purpose and should never be drawn into controversy.

Castus should remain forever non-professional, but we may employ special workers. We may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Anonymity and unity are in the spiritual foundations of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place Christian principles before our personal desires. To practice genuine humility in our daily lives.

# Putting on the Whole Armor of God



Those of us in the fellowship must put on the “*Whole Armor of God*” if we are to have the hope of surviving the trials in life that James so vividly depicts for us in his letter to the twelve tribes in dispersion, warning them against the evils of this world and to guard against them

Paul urges us in Ephesians to dress our selves at all times in the “*Armor of God*”, to be prepared to fight in battle against the evils of this world.

***Although we must live in this world,  
we need not be of this world.***



# *Mentorship*

*Choosing a Mentor in The Castus Society is an important step that the organization considers crucial to chastity. A Mentor helps develop and live a chaste life by working the 12 Step program, learning, and adhering to the traditions of The Castus Society. Mentors also help people new to the program to connect with others in Castus, to strengthen ties in the program and encourage one another to live a chaste life.*

1. Go to Castus meetings in your area and find a Castus meeting you like and feel comfortable. People who have been successful in their Chastity for a while call this their "Home Group." Whether you connect with the people or topics better, or you just get a better "vibe," feeling at home in meetings helps you keep coming back.

2. Listen carefully to the meeting discussions and find someone in the meeting whom you can connect with, or whom you would feel comfortable talking to about personal matters. This person, by Castus Guide lines, should be of the same sex and have at least six months, but preferably at least a year's experience in living a chaste life. They should be working their own steps well, seem balanced and truly enjoy their Chastity. Look for someone you can look up to and be honest with. Successful mentoring relationships are built on mutual respect and trust.

3. Ask the person you have identified as a potential mentor if they will mentor you. Note those you may have considered to be a possible match for you, and ask for a moment of their time after the meeting. This first request may be the hardest part. To those of us just starting out, dealing with any discomfort in social situations or faking the confidence when you do not necessarily believe in yourself yet, is especially difficult. Getting a mentor as soon as possible, is considered by Castus to be the best way to be held accountable for doing the work it takes to live a chaste life.

4. Follow through. Ask your Mentor what their expectations are, how often you need to meet or talk and when you will start working the steps together. Most likely, they will tell you all of these things right off the bat and even schedule a meeting with you immediately. Most people in Castus will tell you to attend meetings as often as you can in the first 90 days, the time when there is the highest rate of regression. Your mentor will let you know their requirements are in terms of how many meetings you need to attend, what happens if you choose to live unchastely, what kind of service you should offer to The Castus Society, and the best way to carry the message to Others. You will be introduced to the Mentors' community of positive reinforcement of Living a "*Chaste Life, a Path to Fidelity*", and be able to hold each other accountable for adhering to this.



5. Keep an open mind about differences between you and your Mentor, and focus on the similarities instead. Mentorship is not about whom you would choose as your friend, but whom you can work with on a consistent basis and be honest with. If there are personality conflicts that keep you from your primary goal "living a chaste life"; it is completely acceptable to find a different Mentor. Many people do not end up with their first Mentor as their permanent

Mentor, and the unease in changing from one to the other is understood within the Castus Society. It is important to give the relationship time, however.

# First Year Guidelines

When we seek help or support for our broken lives, this new behavior is the beginning of our new life. You're probably not familiar with what to expect during those first few days and weeks let alone the first year.

Having learned a bit about what will possibly happen and actually living it, are two different things. Then, there is what happens for the rest of the first year with which you must contend. What's the best way to sort it all out? Is there some kind of roadmap or guidebook that can let you know what you're in for? What can you expect in the first year of recovery?

## *Is Everyone Different?*

You've heard this before and it's well worth repeating: Exactly how your new life progresses will be different from everyone else's who is making this arduous journey. It's reasonable to expect that your adjustment to your new focus in life will be very much dependent on how you invest in it, your emotional and psychological state of mind, your physical condition, the strength of your support networks, living conditions, whether or not you're employed, and other factors.

Do not be deluded by having the failure-proven attitude of "Terminal uniqueness", no matter what the sin was and our new walk. We all have the same burden and stain on our soul of living an unchaste life

In other words, while you can look at how others are doing – perhaps friends you make in the Castus Society – you really can't compare your life to theirs. Changing to living a chaste life is different for all of us. One person you meet may be suffering from unbridled fornication, another from adultery or repeated adulterous affairs while others are still out suffering from the devastating effects of being steeped in pornography. There are those too whose deep-seated objectification of the world around them will keep them from ever experiencing the joy, calm, peace and comfort of living a chaste life. Some will not realize the grave danger in which they put themselves and their souls by even just dabbling in unchaste activities. Each person's new life will be unique to them.

With that in mind, there are some parts of our journey during the first year that are fairly common. They may not occur in accordance to the calendar, but, sooner or later, everyone trying to amend their lives will likely experience them. Some may go through stages more than once, especially if they slip and relapse, or fail to do the work and personal commitment required.

## ***Depression is Common***

Many people experience feelings of depression – the so-called “blues” – during the early stages, generally considered the first year after our commitment to change. When depression occurs, it cannot only interfere with your recovery but also your ability to reach out for support.

Let’s take a particular depressive symptom – poor concentration. If you have this symptom as a result of depression, you may be unable to, or have more difficulty in paying attention to group sessions, or listening to another group member who is sharing a personal experience during a fellowship meeting.

Don’t be overly distressed about feeling blue during the first few weeks of recovery. But if the condition lasts considerably longer, or if you find that your feelings are worsening, that you have long bouts of sadness or think at all about suicide, get in touch with your doctor or therapist immediately. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK at any time of the day or night if you just can’t take it anymore. The call is free and is available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. You will be routed to the crisis center nearest to you.

While it’s normal to experience some periods of sadness or being blue in the early days of our new life, it should pass within a few weeks. As you get more involved and acclimated to the feeling of having turned your life over to God, your thoughts will tend to be focused on walking down the righteous path, and less on the thinking of negative and depressing thoughts.

## ***Getting Acquainted with Schedules***

Becoming accustomed to scheduling your time is critically important to getting your new life jump-started. At first, there are Castus



Society meetings, talking with your mentor, contacts and calls etc. that you need to put on your daily agenda. Since this is an all-new view of chastity for you, it's only natural that you'd feel confused, a little disoriented, fearful of doing the wrong thing, unsure of what to do when we don't even know how to get through the day. That's what your meetings and talking with your mentor are for. Schedule them as often as possible. If that's what it takes to keep your mind at ease and keep you on track working towards living a chaste life.

The good news is that soon there will be Castus Society meetings everywhere, in all 50 states and many foreign countries. If you can't physically get to a meeting, you can find one on the Internet or call Castus (614) 918-8299. There's always support available to you – and you simply must learn how to involve yourself in these meetings.

Another vital step early in our surrender is to find a Mentor that is in the Castus Society. Go to a few meetings and see how you relate to various individuals who you might consider asking to be your Mentor. Why do you need a mentor so soon? The truth is that your Mentor can help you in your transition. Being unfamiliar with how the Twelve Steps work, or having a lot of questions about the group process, what to expect, how to handle overwhelming urges and cravings or just a lack of understanding— These are some things with which your sponsor is committed.

*Don't forget that your new life has caused a major shift in the family situation and there's the daily routine of the family that may factor into your schedule. You can't allow your commitment to be jeopardized because you feel obligated to jump right back into a situation for which you are not prepared. To avoid hard feelings and misunderstandings, have a conversation with your mentor right away about the importance of keeping to your schedule.*

Within the first few months, dealing with Schedules will start becoming easier than during the first few weeks. If you have a job, this will probably be somewhat stressful, and there are a lot of conflicting emotions you'll likely encounter when you go to work and interact with your boss and co-workers. Give yourself time to get readjusted. Don't go overboard by tackling projects and assignments all at once. You'll not only be over stressing yourself, but you'll be

setting yourself up for a crash. Attempting to do too much too soon is a recipe for disaster.

**How do you get acquainted with schedules?** Start by mapping it all out on paper or the computer. Jot down where and what you need to be doing; Spending time with God, Family, friends, Castus meetings, work, doctor, hobbies, recreation, etc. – and when, for each day of the week. Allow a little flexibility or free time to meditate. Gradually, modify your schedules to meet your changing needs. Your needs will change as you become more and more committed to Gods will for you and your willingness to carry it out.

Keep in mind that scheduling is going to be important for your first year, ask for help and understanding in fulfilling your scheduled obligations and commitment from your family and friends and if possible some leniency at work towards some of your new personal commitments.

### ***Avoid Overconfidence***

When you're at different points in your decision to live a chaste life 30, 60, 90 days, even six months, things may seem to be going smoothly for you, it's quite possible that you might start to feel a little overconfident. You may think, for example, that you can take a chance and go out with your friends again or you thought you would go to that party you heard about, maybe you will sit down at the computer without having installed filtering and accountability software.

Don't be tempted. It's simply not worth the risk. Anyone who's ever tried this will tell you it's harder than they thought. Keep your self in chaste environments, try to guard your eyes and guard your thoughts, it's the second look that could too be the sin.

The chaste life may seem to foreign in thought or too tough to accomplish, especially for the rest of your life, if you think about it in those terms. Just resolve to stay Chaste today. Live in the present. Resist the temptation to think that you can handle the cravings and urges that will come your way if you put yourself in harm's way. Just do what you need to do today to keep your commitment to God and yourself. Greet each day with thanksgiving, a positive outlook and keep working.

## *As our walk continues*

After many months of commitment and moving on up to the one-year mark in living a chaste life, things should have smoothed out quite a bit. By now, you know the danger signs, the people, places and things you have to avoid because of their association with being unchaste. You know when you've pushed yourself too hard and need to back off a bit, recognizing that your commitment to chastity always comes first.

You might start thinking that you've got this whole chastity thing licked, that you can cut back a little and forego meetings. Don't give in to this thought. One quick way to derail your personal success is to stop doing the work you need to be doing. When you're focusing more on getting ahead, making more money, all those other plans that interfere with your commitment to chastity, you're doing yourself a huge disservice.

Sure, you might not be going to as many meetings each week. That's perfectly understandable. There is a tendency to need the frequency of meetings less as time goes on. But you still need to go to your weekly meeting. Don't let this become a casualty of your new life. We all need support when we change our lives and as social beings, we need our fellowship as well as God's grace. We are committed to amend our lives and our desire to change our lives is essential. Where would we be if we did not have the God's gift of the fellowship?

Another benefit of frequenting meetings is the reinforcement such support brings. No matter how many years you have led and helped others to lead a chaste life, there will always come a time when you have a crisis. You might think you've left cravings and urges far behind, having successfully weathered them time and time again. Then a major situation comes up, one which taxes you emotionally, psychologically, and even physically. Suddenly you forget what to do, or your formerly successful coping mechanisms don't work this time. It happens, and more often than you think. Even your mentor has times of crisis. Just because they are your Mentor doesn't mean they don't have struggles.

Many continue to attend regular weekly Castus meetings for many years. It's like maintenance to them, keeping them where they need to be and always with their commitment to God first and foremost.

after you have been apart of The Castus Society for a short while your mentor will tell you that you might be at the point where you should begin group service as well as continuing to be of service to others – those who are new to chastity, just as you once were.

## **Here are a few things to keep in mind**

***It's not going to be easy.*** For the first few months, you can expect to be completely disoriented.

***It might be painful.*** When you make a commitment to change your life it may hurt more that you can imagine, leaving old behaviors behind.

***You have to change one thing: everything.*** It's easy to make the mistake of believing that you only need to change the fact that you now live a chaste life. The truth is; if you really want to experience the beauty of Chastity, you will have to make some major life changes. This means you will have to make new friends. You will have to begin attending Castus Society meetings. You will have to stay away from certain places and things that trigger you. You will have to learn to interact with the world differently to find the serenity that God has to offer.

***You might feel a little crazy.*** In the first few months of your new commitment to Chastity, your mind works overtime to realign itself to its natural functions, which have been interrupted as a result of our poor behaviors. This means your mood, feelings, thoughts, attitude and overall disposition are going to be out of whack for a while. This is completely normal.

## **Regression Dangers**

Although it's more likely to occur during the first 90 days, the danger of regression is always there. The only way to guard against falling back into old behaviors is to actively renew your commitment every day. Recognize that there will be good days and days where everything seems to go wrong. It doesn't matter if this is the first month or month nine. When stuff happens, it sometimes happens all at once. Remember the serenity prayer.

By daily renewing your commitment to live a chaste life, practicing the strategies that you've found effective, networking and gaining support from your family and Castus Society groups, you will be gaining strength and confidence in your abilities to remain chaste.

What are the chances that you'll have old behaviors come back after a year? The good news is that the longer you're focused on being chaste, the less likely that you'll have any regression. If you do slip, you've got ready access to a solid support network that can help you get back on your feet again. If it's a temporary slip, just get back to doing what worked to keep you chaste before. Maybe there are some lessons you didn't quite learn the first time that will make more of an impression this time.

Whatever happens, a slip or a relapse isn't the end of the world. It's not a failure, either. It just means you need to have greater resolve to your commitment. But, if things have been going well for you the past year, regression is less likely to occur.

That doesn't mean that you won't be tested, Sirach 2:1-5

This is where your mentor and Castus support groups really come in handy.

## ***Major Changes In Your First Year?***

Early on, we can feel very good, and within the first year, many are convinced we can handle anything. We have a strong desire to make big changes, to get on with our lives. However, no matter how compelling these feelings are, we should avoid making big changes until we have some time under our belts.

***What is wrong with changes, anyway?*** Isn't Becoming Chaste all about change? Yes, but not external change. As you may have heard, Chastity is an "inside job." If you start thinking that external changes are the keys to your happiness, you are falling back into old habits. External things will fail you just as they did when you were living your old life. For Children of God, lasting happiness is only possible in fidelity, and fidelity comes from doing the work to improve your spiritual condition, your relationship with God.

***What if the change is good?*** Becoming chaste is a difficult process, and early chastity is fragile. Even objectively positive changes can jeopardize that process, because change is usually accompanied by some of the following things, all of which can be hard for newly chaste people to handle:

***Expectations*** – the conviction that a change will be good is based on expectations of a certain outcome. Your ego tells you that the results will all be good, but that is rarely the case. Step 4 will help you learn to identify and temper your expectations.

***Stress*** – Any change brings stress, and you should not add unnecessary stress to your early Chastity.

***Elation*** – If everything goes fantastically, you may be faced with a situation where you feel ecstatic and celebratory. Sounds good, right? But experience shows that over elation can be harmful, too.

***Failure*** – Most have experience with making promises and failing to come through. This pattern does not stop just because you want to change your life. Just learning to show up is a process. Give it time.

***But why a whole year?*** We are like newborn babies. We have to learn how to walk again, gathering experience of just living before we start tackling the more complicated aspects of normal life. You cannot become a surgeon without learning anatomy. Think of the first year as an introductory class in “*Chaste living*”.

A year is not just a nice round number. After a year you should be well on your way to completing the steps. Read the promises – that’s the state in which you want to find yourself before you start making major changes. Few changes are so urgent that they cannot wait a year. It may sound like forever, but if the change is really a good idea, it will still be an option when you are ready. Give yourself a chance to meet life’s big changes fully.

***But I really think this change is a good idea.*** Yes, everybody thinks their changes are a good idea. Ignoring suggestions or thinking you know best is self-will, one of the main symptoms of your sinfulness. Thinking you are a special, unique exception is a form of grandiosity typical to our egos.

If none of the logic above sways you, following this suggestion is one of those leaps of faith where you get to trust 70 years of 12-step experience rather than your own ideas. Remember what they say: “Your best thinking got you here”.

In summary, do not place your hope in external changes. Keep your focus on changing you through the steps. Even good changes can impede your progress. Wait until you are healthy enough to handle major changes.

Test any change with this checklist. Will this change...

... add stress to my life?

... decrease my free time?

... make it harder to attend meetings?

... increase my responsibilities?

... tend to draw my primary focus away from fidelity?

... place me near situations or people dangerous to my chastity?

If the answer is yes to any of those questions, the change can probably wait until you have a year and have done Step 9.

***The classic major changes to avoid in the first year:***

Do not quit your job

Do not move to a new place

Do not start a serious relationship

Do not get married

Do not have a baby

Do not start a new business

Do not go to graduate school

Do not host big parties

Do not start training for a marathon

Do not drastically increase the amount you exercise

***Some specific situations or activities to avoid:***

Avoid being with the opposite sex other than in-group settings

Avoid bars and intoxicated people

Avoid spending too much time with your family

Avoid performing in front of large groups of people

Avoid activities likely to result in serious injury

Avoid traveling alone, with family, or with unchaste companions

***Talk to your Mentor about these possible exceptions:***

Changing your friends

Leaving an abusive relationship

Quitting a job that surrounds you with an unchaste environment

Quitting smoking

Starting or stopping certain medications

**Living chaste the first year**

There's no question that the first year of living a chaste life can be alternately a time of elation, depression, delight or confusion. You may go from being completely thrown by events and challenges to being better able to cope with daily stresses and opportunities. Learning how to deal with anger, overcome isolation, find joy in learning new things and meeting new people Even learning how to experience and appreciate overwhelming and completely unexpected happiness takes quite a bit of doing.

Abraham Lincoln said "Most of us are only as happy as we make up our minds to be."

**Rejoice and Keep Working the Steps.**

Bottom line: when you've made it to your first-year anniversary of Living a chaste life, it's time to celebrate the milestone and keep working the steps. Commitment is all about continuity, doing what works, learning how to be of service to others once you've found your footing.

***Rejoice in your chastity and live out your commitment to God,  
happy and joyful in each day of your new life.***

***Be At Peace Prayer***

Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life;  
rather, look to them with full hope that as they arise,

God, whose very own you are, will lead you safely through all things;  
and when you cannot stand it, God will carry you in His arms.

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow;  
the same understanding Father who cares for you today will take care of  
you then and every day.

He will either shield you from suffering or will give  
you unfailing strength to bear it.

Be at peace, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.

*Saint Francis De Sales*



## *How do I know if I am living a chaste life?*

When we come into the Castus Society we are required to put on the “Armor of God” Ephesians 6: 10-12, this is necessary for all of us, if we desire to live a chaste life. After we have become this model in life for six months, we can receive the Armor of God sacramental of the Castus Society. Talk with your mentor to see if you are disposed to receive it

*(Sacramental medallion is depicted at the beginning of this section)*

Chastity is not just a description of whether or not we have sex or whether or not we are monogamous or even if we are celibate. Chastity is part of the celebration of God’s gift of life in harmony with our vocations, whether we are single, married, or religious. How we are to celebrate our chastity is tied to our vocations, our vocations are the basis for which we understand chastity’s meaning in each of our lives.

Our obligation to demonstrate chastity is endless. The level of immodest dress, word and deed has escalated to a level that is unmanageable. We are so desensitized that we cannot even begin to see the impact that it has had on others and our lives, and the burden we have laid upon them.

*Lets look at what do we convey in thought word or deed.*

Have I...

- ...committed rape?
- ...committed incest?
- ...committed adultery
- ...committed fornication?
- ...been impure with myself (masturbated)?
- ...engaged in prostitution or paid for the services of a prostitute?
- ...made use of pornography or permitted my children to do so?
- ...preyed upon children or youth for my sexual pleasure?
- ...engaged in unnatural sexual activities?
- ...touched or embraced another impurely?

Have I...

...willfully indulged in any sexual pleasure whether complete or incomplete?

...engaged in sexual foreplay (petting) reserved for marriage?

...deliberately caused male climax outside of normal sexual intercourse? (Catechism, 2366)

...engaged in prolonged or passionate kissing with someone who is not my spouse?

...seduced someone or allowed myself to be seduced?

...made uninvited and unwelcome sexual advances toward another?

...responded to uninvited and unwelcome sexual advances from another?

...indulged in lustful desires for anyone, or willfully desired to see or do anything impure?

...consented to impure glances?

...boasted of my sins or taken delight in past sins?

...watched suggestive movies, TV programs; read indecent literature or looked at bad pictures?

...neglected to control my imagination?

...given in to lust (the desire for sexual pleasure unrelated to spousal love in marriage)?

...claimed my own marital right without concern for my spouse?

...willfully entertained or taken pleasure in impure thoughts?

...neglected in praying at once to banish such bad thoughts and temptations?

Part of our responsibilities is to be good stewards of life that God has created and with which we have been endowed. If we answered yes to any of the above, then we are not chaste.

Another base issue is how we view our fellow men. Do we view them as companions and what we can do to serve them or are they pawns or viewed as objects to be used to serve what ever desires or level of accomplishment we want for ourselves in life or in any given moment? When we decide that others are here to serve us, we have placed ourselves in a position of which we are not deserving, let alone for which we are not qualified.

The following is a list we need to continually work- to strive to eliminate these behaviors from our lives, so we have a fighting chance to obtain chastity and with Gods grace maintain it.

...used vulgar, suggestive, or obscene speech?

...deliberately or carelessly, done anything to provoke or occasion impure thoughts or desires in others?

...attended immodest dances or indecent plays?

...been in lewd company?

...unnecessarily remained alone in the company of someone of the opposite sex?

...used artificial or unnatural means of birth control?

...refused to be open to conception without just cause? (Catechism, 2368)

...deprived my spouse of the marital right without just cause?

...kept company with someone whom I cannot marry in the Catholic Church?

...used indecent language in conversation or music, or told indecent stories or jokes?

...willingly listened to such conversation, music, stories, or jokes?

...given scandal by living with a member of the opposite sex without the benefit of a marriage blessed by the Catholic Church?

...avoided laziness, gluttony, idleness, and the occasions of impurity?

...guarded modesty in the home?

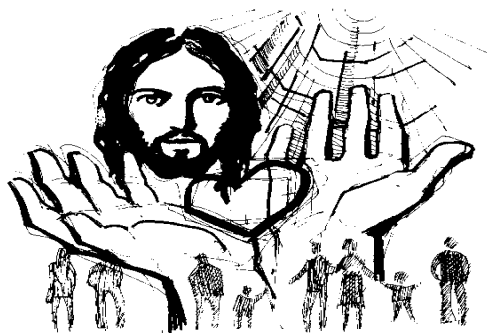
...encouraged others to wear immodest clothing?

...harmed my own soul by intentionally and without necessity exposing myself to temptations?

...been an occasion of sin for others by wearing tight or otherwise revealing and immodest clothing?

...been grasping and avaricious, placing too great importance upon material goods and comforts?

***Pray,  
ask God to help you.  
Serve others,  
Turn to a friend,  
Pray!  
Peace be with you.***



# Emotional Integrity

Emotions produce euphoric and intoxicating effects. They can produce a sense of ease and comfort and contentment. When we are operating under the influence of our emotions versus the influence of our intelligence -- we are Emotionally Inebriate.

The euphoric and intoxicating effects of Emotional Inebriation can produce a dependency and even an addiction to the emotional states. Withdrawal of Emotional Inebriation often results with the toxic feelings of guilt, remorse, depression, resentment, feelings of personal inadequacy, loneliness, restlessness, irritability, discontentment, and the similar physical symptoms in our body that are often associated with being under the influence or control of any external Source.

So, it isn't any wonder why -- a pattern develops of a return to "chasing the euphoria of the emotional state" that requires certain behavioral and psychological dependencies, scenarios, individuals, experiences and conditions -- to produce the desired emotional state.

By learning how to discipline, control & create our desired emotional states; and eliminate our undesired emotional states; we can turn Grizzly Bears into Teddy Bears with God and not external stimuli.

Here are excerpts from a letter, which Bill Wilson wrote several years ago to a close friend who also had troubles with depression. The letter appeared in the "Grapevine" January 1958.

## ***Bill W.'s letter on Emotional Integrity***

I think that many oldsters who have put our "cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in cures, the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance, urges quite appropriate to age seventeen, prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven and fifty-seven.

I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up emotionally and spiritually. How painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover, finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse. Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How do we translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy and good living. Well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all of our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious, from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream, be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden 'Mr. Hyde' becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones, folks like you and me, commencing to get results. Last autumn, depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself "Why can't the twelve steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer ... "it's better to comfort than to be comforted". Here was the formula, all right, but why didn't it work?

Suddenly, I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence, almost absolute dependence, on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed upon any act of circumstance whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis did. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself to God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others, as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies. For my dependence meant demand, a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute dependence" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the real current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependence and its consequent demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love: we may then be able to gain emotional sobriety.

Of course, I haven't offered you a really new idea, only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own hexes' at depth. Nowadays, my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine. ~ Bill Wilson

# HUMILITY

*Humility: The Foundation Principle of each of the Twelve Steps*

"Indeed, the attainment of greater *humility* is the foundation principle of each of the Twelve Steps. For without some degree of humility, none of us can stay chaste."

*A Definition of Humility*; Another great dividend we may expect from confiding our defect to another human being is humility -a word often misunderstood. To those who have made progress, *it amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be.* Therefore, our first practical move toward humility must consist of recognizing our deficiencies."

Regarding "a clear recognition". The Steps 4 & 5 describe an educational process to identify details of, research sane ideals and develop solutions for underlying causes of our addictions and other problems. Accurate, thorough description and analysis of Resentments, Fears and Sex Episodes initiate this life long process. Answering in a tangible manner (e.g. pen and paper) all questions in step 4 about each episode is a major start to clear recognition. The big question is "*What should we have done instead?*", suggests learning better responses to past flaws from recovered persons and other sources of effective action. Also, "The Mentor probably points out that the newcomer has some assets which can be noted along with his liabilities. This tends to clear away morbidity and encourage balance."

Regarding "*what and who we really are*" "Custus and acceptance have taught me that there is a bit of good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us; that we are all children of God and we each have a right to be here."

*Regarding "what we could be"* "The Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to Cherish our sin and enable the sufferer to become *HAPPILY AND USEFULLY WHOLE.*"

*Humility and Spiritual Centeredness.* Custus is spiritually centered. Most of us have found enough humility to believe in and depend upon

God. We have found that humility by facing the fact that cherishing our sins is a fatal malady over which we are individually powerless."

*Obtaining Humility.* Only by discussing ourselves, holding back nothing, only by being willing to take advice and accept direction and accept Gods will in our lives could we set foot on the road to straight thinking, solid honesty, and *genuine humility*.

*Humility* is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less.

*Lack of Humility; The crippling handicap of those who want to amend their lives*

For thousands of years we have been demanding more than our share of security, prestige, and romance. When we seemed to be succeeding, we drank to dream still greater dreams. When we were frustrated, even in part, we drank for oblivion. Never was there enough of what we thought we wanted. In all these strivings, so many of them well-intentioned, our crippling handicap had been our lack of humility.

*Lack of Humility or the "Contempt Prior to Investigation" is the Key to Keeping Oneself in Everlasting Ignorance* There is a principle which is a bar against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance---that principle is *contempt prior to investigation*. ~Herbert Spencer

*How a lack of Humility expresses itself in Selfishness - Self-Centeredness"* Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt." (A.A. Big Book. Pg. 62)

*Lack of Humility equals Habitually trying to manipulate others to our willful desires* When we habitually try to manipulate others to our own willful desire, they revolt, and resist us heavily. Then we develop hurt feelings, a sense of persecution, and a desire to retaliate. We have not once sought to be one in a family, to be a friend among friends.



*Prayer on Humility*\_"Humility is perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed, or irritable, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing that is done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and kneel to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble." (Author of the prayer is unknown.)

*Courage and Humility*\_"Men and women who use alcohol as an escape are not the only ones who are afraid of life, hostile to the world, fleeing from it into loneliness. Millions who are not alcoholics are living today in illusory worlds, nurturing the basic anxieties and insecurities of human existence rather than face themselves with courage and humility. To these people, we can offer as a cure no magic potion, no chemical formula, no powerful drug. But it can demonstrate to them how to use the tools of humility, honesty, devotion, and love which indeed are the heart of recovery."

*Humility and the Steps*" It took me some time to realize that the Twelve Steps were designed to help correct defects of character and so help remove the obsession to cherish our sins. The Twelve Steps are a spiritual way of living, soon meant honest thinking, not wishful thinking, open mindedness, a willingness to try and a faith to acceptance. They meant patience, tolerance and *HUMILITY*, and above all the belief that a Power greater than myself could help. That power is God."

*Bill W.'s Thoughts on Humility*" I see humility for today as the safe and secure stance midway between violent emotional extremes. It is a quiet place where I can keep enough perspective and enough balance, to take my next small step up the clearly marked road that points toward eternal values. As I thus get down to my right size and stature, my self-concern and importance become amusing." (Bill W.)

*Humility, Guilt and Pride*\_"Today I think I can trace a clear linkage between my guilt and my pride. In pride I could say, "Look at me, I am wonderful." In guilt, I would moan, "I'm awful." Therefore, guilt is really the reverse side of the coin of pride. Guilt aims at self-

destruction, and pride aims at the destruction of others. This is why I see **humility** for today as that safe and secure stance midway between these violent emotional extremes." (Bill W.)

*Humility: The Nourishing Ingredient That Gives Us Serenity*\_"Where humility had formerly stood for a forced feeding on humble pie, it now begins to mean the nourishing ingredient which can give us serenity. This improved perception of humility starts another revolutionary change in our outlook. It brought a measure of humility, which we soon discovered to be a healer of pain. We began to fear pain less, and desire humility more than ever."

*Humility and Gratitude*\_(lack of humility = "great conceits") "I try hard to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know." (Bill W.)

*Lack of Humility equals Egocentricity* "Our unreasonable individualism (egocentricity if you like) was, of course, the main reason we all failed in life and betook ourselves to obsessions. When we couldn't coerce others into conformity with our own plans and desires, we lashed out. When others tried to coerce us, we also lashed out. Though now Chaste, we still have a strong hangover of these early traits which caused us to Cherish our sins. Therein probably hangs a clue to our lack of personal government.

*Pride, the Lack of Humility* "Pride is the basic breeder of most human difficulties, the road block to true progress. When the satisfaction of our instincts for sex, security, and a place in society become the primary object of our lives, then pride steps in to justify our excesses."

*Humility and Ambition*\_"True ambition is not what we thought it was. True ambition is the profound desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God according to his will for us."

# *Healing Unwanted Memories*



Human memory is a complicated subject. Many of us are not aware of the impact recorded memories have on our lives. Every aspect of our life is affected by what is filed in our long-term memory bank. How we think, feel and behave toward others, the world and ourselves is influenced 50% on what is stored in our memory. We are not always aware of our enjoyable and successful memories but some

memories seems to haunt our minds and affects our ability to function.

The human brain is a complex organ. The brain regulates functioning of all the organs, balance and movement of the body, processes of the mind (thinking, emotions and behaviors), and spiritual elements of self. It is also responsible for the memory functions such as recording, storage and replaying of life events.

Our brain's ability to perform all these functions is through "order". Without order, the brain would not be able to accomplish what it does. Simply put, the brain perceptually receives and records all the information from a life event; it processes all the images, smells, records all the sounds, achieves closure of feelings or associated emotions and then places the recorded life event into long-term storage bank for future retrieval and replay.

Memories of sin can be hard to remove from our minds, especially if we cherished the sin that we committed. We need to stop lusting over the memories of past. The main reason for this urgent need is that cherishing memories of sin can block our prayers, healing and deliverance (Psalm 66:18). With the Holy Spirit's help, we can put

the old memories to death and focus our minds on God (Romans 8:11,13).

The first step toward healing is to ask God to remove our sinful memories and to help us surrender them. We also want to ask God to help us to see our sin through his eyes. Next, we need to confess and renounce the sin in the memories. Finally, we must start training our minds to think pure thoughts.

Training our minds to have pure thoughts is perhaps the most difficult task of walking in freedom. If you have been letting your fantasies run wild, you are probably wondering if it is even possible to get control over your thoughts. What is impossible in our own strength becomes possible with the help of the Holy Spirit. Our responsibility is to work through the Holy Spirit to bring our thoughts into obedience to Christ.

In addition to the problem of sinful memories, we have spiritual enemies (Ephesians 6:12) who are masters at tempting us in our thoughts (examples: Luke 4:5-6, Acts 5:3). These temptations cater to our mind's natural desires (Matthew 15:18-19). Satan's goal is to persuade us to engage our imaginations for evil desires and lead us into sin.

Our imagination is a powerful gift from God. Our imaginations are a collection of focused thoughts that creates a false reality in our minds. As we are made in God's likeness, our imagination is a scaled down version of God's imagination. We can create things in our imaginations. Satan has been baiting people's imaginations ever since the Garden of Eden. He enticed Eve to imagine having God-like knowledge. Likewise, using our imaginations sinfully places an obstacle between God and us. Thankfully, we have the power to control our thoughts and honor God with them.



## ***Prayer for Healing Memories***

Lord God, how can I understand my errors? Cleanse me from my secret faults and cherished sins. Let me refrain from habitual sin. Lord, do not let my sin rule over me. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you.

Lord, you are my strength and my Redeemer I pray that you will not remember the sins of my youth. Please think of me according to Your Divine mercy.

Lord, I turn away from all the sins that I have committed.

O Lord God, forgive me, for I commit my thoughts to You. I surrender the burden of my sinfulness to You. I ask that You will strengthen me now and direct my thoughts in righteousness.

Father, help me to no longer dwell on any image or memory that will encourage me to sin. Help me not to return to those memories any longer. Please wash my mind with the blood of Jesus Christ. Cleanse me, forgive me and heal me.

Please remove every depiction of sin from my memory and teach me how to walk in obedience and faithfulness to You. Give me the strength and endurance to walk to victory, no matter how long it takes. I pray that Your Holy Spirit fill me anew. Renew my body, mind and spirit in Christ Jesus.

I thank You Father. Help me to respond to your grace so that Your will may be done in my life. I ask all this through Your Son Jesus Christ, in unity with the Holy Spirit, Amen

*Our Lady of Perpetual help, pray for us,*

## *The Choice*

Everything is a choice. This is life's greatest truth and its hardest lesson. It is a great truth because it reminds us of our power. Not power over others, but the often-untapped power to be ourselves and to live the life we have imagined. It is a hard lesson, because it causes us to realize that we have chosen the life we are living right now.

It is perhaps frightening for us to think that we have chosen to live our life exactly as it is today. Frightening because we may not like what we find when we look at our lives today. However, it is also liberating, because we can now begin to choose what we will find when we look at our life in the tomorrows that life unlived before us.

What will you see when you look at your life ten years from now? What will you choose? Life is choices. You have chosen to live this day. You have chosen to live in a certain city. You have chosen to believe certain ideas. You have chosen the people you call friends. You choose the food you eat, the clothes you wear, and the thoughts you think. You choose to be calm or restless, you choose to feel appreciative or ungrateful. Love is a choice. Anger is a choice. Fear is a choice. Courage is a choice.

*You choose.*

Sometimes we choose the best version of ourselves, and sometimes we choose a second rate version of ourselves. Everything is a choice, and our choices echo throughout our lives... and into history... and on and on into eternity.

Most people never fully accept this truth. They spend their lives arguing for their weaknesses, complaining about their lot in life, or blaming other people for their weaknesses and their lot in life. You may argue that you are forced to live in a certain city or drive a certain car, but it is not true. Moreover, if it is, it is true only temporarily and because of a choice, you have made in the past.

We choose, and, in doing so, we design our lives. Some may say that we do not choose our circumstances. You'd be surprised. We

have much more power over the circumstances of our lives than most men and women would ever admit. In addition, even if circumstances are thrust upon us, we choose how we respond to those circumstances.

Others may argue that they did not choose the country they were born in or the parents they were born to. How do we know we didn't choose these things? We are all endowed with free will. Did we not have this free will before we were born?

Perhaps one day we will realize that we have chosen much more than we have even imagined. I hope that day is today. For the day we accept that we have chosen to choose our choices is the day we cast off the shackles of victimhood and are set free to pursue the lives we were born to live. Learn to master the moment of decision and you will live a life uncommon.

***Excerpts from, The Rhythm of Life  
and  
Living Every Day with Passion & Purpose  
By Matthew Kelly***



*For more info, please visit [DynamicCatholic.com](http://DynamicCatholic.com) and learn more about their free book program paying only \$5.95 for shipping and handling.*



# *Values & Conflict*

What are your values? Do you live a life that reflects these? Take some time and reflect on your values and how they are manifested in your life. Most of us find that when we live a life that is not congruent with our values, we easily build up a tremendous amount of unresolved conflict. This conflict can cripple our lives in such a way that we can't even begin to embrace our values, let alone have anyone recognize that we have any. When we start to align our actions with what we profess, we find that these conflicts will fade away, allowing us to be the men that God meant for us to be. Take note of your values and their proper order in your life. Also, note what each value means to you. Here is an example of someone's professed values. Make your own list and keep it with you.

## *Relationship with God*

To live out the adage: "God's gift to me is my life, my gift to God is what I make of it." To live the two greatest commandments.

## *Relationships with Family*

**Wife:** Love (Charity), Security and Stability, financial. Emotional (to be that anchor that they can tether themselves to, so they can weather any storm), Acceptance, Encouragement, Vulnerability. To imitate Jesus Christ to my wife; That is, to submit myself to her as Christ did the church- *Completely*.

**Children:** To continue to strive to be a good example of what it is to be a Christian and to encourage them to do the same.

**Grandchildren:** To try to be all that I can to uphold and encourage the integrity of their walk through life with God. To offer an example of God's mercy to my children and grandchildren at all times, in hopes that they can experience a loving & forgiving father.

### **Obligations to extended family**

To whenever possible help them in what is lacking in their temporal needs that they cannot provide for themselves.



## ***Friends***

I have few, but to be there for them when I can. That in all my relationships I should show that even when I fall short to always strive to seek forgiveness and, with God's grace, to persevere and try again.

## ***Home***

That it should be cared for and above all be a sanctuary for all those who enter it. I would not want it to be somewhere anyone would ever question their being welcome.

## ***Work Ethic***

If I always worked as though I were working were for God, I hope I would never fall short. I am only a steward of the time that God gave me in this life. What am I doing with that time to serve him and others?

Our families, employers, and communities deserve for us to respond to their needs. Foremost is our response to their desire to have a sense of security in the importance in which we view them in our lives. To our families it is the desire we have to be willing to go to any length and sacrifice to take care of them.

For our employers, or those to whom we are accountable, we need to have a strong regard for not only our own activities, but also to have a corporate or holistic view. This will give us the courage at the appropriate times to be prepared to set aside our own needs or desires for the sake of those who support us.

As a member of our communities, we all have a responsibility to contribute to its success and welfare.

***When considering all of your values,  
always remember the proper  
order of charity.***



# *Prayers & Thoughts*

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# *Scriptural Meditations*

## *Prayer before meditation*

*My God, I firmly believe that you are here present and I humbly adore you in union with the Angels and Saints.*

*I am sorry for having sinned, because Your are infinitely good and sin displeases You. I love You above all things and with my whole heart.*

*I offer You all that I am and all that I have, my soul with all its faculties, and my body with all its senses.*

*Enlighten my understanding and inflame my will, that I may know and do what is pleasing to You.*

*I beseech You to direct all the powers of my soul, all my thoughts and affections to Your service and Your glory as well as to my own sanctification and salvation.*

*Amen*

**Sexual Prohibitions**  
*Leviticus 20:1-27*

**Try to live Gods Will**  
*1 Thes 4:3-8*

**Religious Infidelity**  
*Revelations 2:12-29*

**Ethical Conduct**  
*Sirach 7:1-17*

**Sexual Abstinence**  
*1Corintians 6:12-7:9*

**Caution in Relationships**  
*Sirach 8:1-19*

**Shame**  
*Sirach 41:14-42:8*

**Warning against Falsehoods**  
*2Peter 2:7-22*

**Faithful Endurance**  
*James 1:12-16*

**Be faithful, be vigilant**  
*2Peter1: 3-11*

**Sexual Misconduct**  
*Sirach 23:16-27*

**Warnings about Women**  
*Sirach 9:1-9*

**A prayer for Self Control**  
*Sirach 22:27-23:6*

## ***Prayer after meditation***

***O my God, I give You my heartfelt thanks for all the graces You have conferred on me during this meditation. Pardon me; I beseech You, all the negligence and all the distractions of which I have been guilty. Give me strength to carry out the resolutions that I have made.***

***Fortify me, that from this moment I may diligently practice this virtue, avoid this fault, or perform this action, to Your honor.***

***Help me to keep my good resolutions, O sweet Virgin Mary; and you, my good angel, recall them to my memory, if I should ever forget or neglect them. Amen***

# THE FORGIVENESS PRAYER

*by Fr. Robert DeGrandis*

Lord Jesus Christ, I ask today to forgive EVERYONE in my life. I know that You will give me the strength to forgive and I thank You that You love me more than I love myself and want my happiness more than I desire it for myself. Father, I forgive YOU for the times death has come into the family, hard times, financial difficulties, or what I thought were punishments sent by You and people said, "It's God's will," and I become bitter and resentful toward You. Purify my heart and mind today.

Lord, I forgive MYSELF for my sins, faults and failings, for all that is bad in myself or that I think is bad, I forgive myself; and I accept Your forgiveness. I further forgive MYSELF for taking Your name in vain, not worshipping You by attending church, for hurting my parents, getting drunk, for sins against purity, bad books, bad movies, fornication, adultery, homosexuality. Also, for abortion, stealing, lying, defrauding, hurting peoples' reputation. You have forgiven me today, and I forgive myself. Thank You, Lord, for your grace at this moment.

I also forgive MYSELF for any delvings in superstition, using ouija boards, horoscopes, going to séances, using fortune telling or wearing lucky charms. I reject all that superstition and choose You alone as my Lord and Savior. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit.

Lord, I truly forgive my MOTHER. I forgive her for all the times she hurt me, she resented me, she was angry with me and for all the times she punished me. I forgive her for the times she preferred my brothers and sisters to me. I forgive her for the times she told me I was dumb, ugly, stupid, the worst of the children or that I cost the family a lot of money. For the times she told me I was unwanted, an accident, a mistake or not what she expected, I forgive her.

Lord, I truly forgive my FATHER. I forgive him for any non-support, any lack of love, affection or attention. I forgive him for

any lack of time, for not giving me his companionship, for his drinking, arguing and fighting with my mother or the other children. For his severe punishments, for desertion, for being away from home, for divorcing my mother or for any running around, I do forgive him.

Lord, I extend forgiveness to my SISTERS AND BROTHERS. I forgive those who rejected me, lied about me, hated me, resented me, competed for my parents' love, those who hurt me, who physically harmed me. For those who were too severe on me, punished me or made my life unpleasant in any way, I do forgive them.

Lord, I forgive my SPOUSE for lack of love, affection, consideration, support, attention, communication; for faults, failings, weaknesses and those other acts or words that hurt or disturb me.

Jesus, I forgive my CHILDREN for their lack of respect, obedience, love, attention, support, warmth, understanding; for their bad habits, falling away from the church, any bad actions which disturb me.

Lord God, I forgive my IN-LAWS, MY MOTHER-IN-LAW, FATHER-IN-LAW, SON/DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AND OTHER RELATIVES by marriage, who treat my family with a lack of love. For all their words, thoughts, actions or omissions which injure and cause pain, I forgive them.

Please help to forgive my RELATIVES, my grandmother and grandfather, aunts, uncles, cousins, who may have interfered in our family, been possessive of my parents, who may have caused confusion or turned one parent against the other.

Jesus, help me to forgive my CO-WORKERS who are disagreeable or make life miserable for me. For those who push their work off on me, gossip about me, won't cooperate with me, try to take my job, I do forgive them.

My NEIGHBORS need to be forgiven, Lord. For all their noise, letting their property run down, not tying up their dogs who run through my yard, not taking in their trash barrels, being prejudiced and running down the neighborhood, I do forgive them.

I do forgive my CLERGYMAN, my CONGREGATION and my CHURCH for their lack of support, affirmation, bad sermons, pettiness, lack of friendliness, not providing me or my family with the inspiration we needed, for any hurts they have inflicted on me or my family, even in the distant past, I forgive them today.

Lord, I forgive all those who are of different PERSUASIONS, those of opposite political views who have attacked me, ridiculed me, discriminated against me, made fun of me, economically hurt me.

I forgive those of different religious DENOMINATIONS AND BELIEFS who have harassed me, attacked me, argued with me, forced their view on me or my family.

Those who have harmed me ETHNICALLY, have discriminated against me, mocked me, made jokes about my race or nationality, hurt my family physically, emotionally or economically, I do forgive them today.

Lord, I forgive all PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE who have hurt me in any way: doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, politicians and civil servants.

Lord I forgive all service people: policemen, firemen, bus drivers, hospital workers and especially repairmen who have taken advantage of me in their work.

Lord, I forgive my EMPLOYER for not paying me enough money, for not appreciating my work, for being unkind and unreasonable with me, for being angry or unfriendly, for not promoting me, and for not complimenting me on my work.



Lord, I forgive my SCHOOL TEACHERS AND INSTRUCTORS of the past as well as the present. For those who punished me, humiliated me, insulted me, treated me unjustly, made fun of me, called me dumb or stupid, made me stay after school, I truly forgive them today.

Lord, I forgive my FRIENDS who have let me down, lost contact with me, do not support me, were not available when I needed help, borrowed money and did not return it, gossiped about me.

Lord Jesus, I especially pray for the grace of forgiveness for the ONE PERSON in life who has HURT ME THE MOST. I ask to forgive anyone who I consider my greatest enemy, the one who is the hardest to forgive or the one who I said I will never forgive.

Lord, I beg pardon of all these people for the hurt I have inflicted on them, especially my mother and father, and my marriage partner. I am especially sorry for the three greatest hurts I have inflicted on each of these. Thank You, Jesus, that I am being freed of the evil of unforgiveness.

Let Your Holy Spirit fill me with light and let every dark area of my mind be enlightened. AMEN.

In the Name of the Father And of the Son And of the Holy Spirit Amen

### ***Tips on Forgiveness***

Forgiveness is an act of the will, not a feeling. If we pray for a person, we can be assured that we have forgiven that person. To help accept an individual and open ourselves to a particular person more, picture him with the Lord Jesus and say to the Lord, "I love him because You love him. I forgive him because You forgive him. "Forgiveness is a life-long obligation. Daily we need to forgive those who hurt or injure us.

## ***Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas for Virtue***

O Lord my God, help me to be obedient without reserve, poor without servility, chaste without compromise, humble without pretense, joyful without depravity, serious without affectation, active without frivolity, submissive without bitterness, truthful without duplicity, fruitful in good works without presumption, quick to revive my neighbor without haughtiness, and quick to edify others by word and example without simulation. Grant me, O Lord, an ever-watchful heart that no alien thought can lure away from You, a noble heart that no base love can sully, an upright heart that no perverse intention can lead astray, an invincible heart that no distress can overcome, an unfettered heart that no impetuous desires can enchain.

O Lord my God, also bestow upon me understanding to know You, zeal to seek You, wisdom to find You, a life that is pleasing to You, unshakable perseverance, and a hope that will one day take hold of You. May I do penance here below and patiently bear Your chastisements. May I also receive the benefits of Your grace, in order to taste your heavenly joys and contemplate Your glory. Amen.

### ***Serenity Prayer***

God grant me the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace. Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that you will make all things right, if I surrender to Your will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen

## ***Chastity Prayer to St. Dymphna***

Most pure virgin, St. Dymphna, we live at a time when many are intent on satisfying every carnal appetite. Your single-minded dedication to Christ alone is providential and inspiring. Please help us by your power with God to see life in proportion as you did. With your aid we propose to perform all our actions for a pure motive, and promptly to resist all our evil inclinations. Amen.

## ***A Prayer For Purity***

Jesus, Lover of chastity, Mary, Mother most pure, and Joseph, chaste guardian of the Virgin, to you I come at this hour, begging you to plead with God for me. I earnestly wish to be pure in thought, word and deed in imitation of your own holy purity.

Obtain for me, then, a deep sense of modesty which will be reflected in my external conduct. Protect my eyes, the windows of my soul, from anything that might dim the luster of a heart that must mirror only Christ like purity. And when the "Bread of Angels becomes the Bread of me" in my heart at Holy Communion, seal it forever against the suggestions of sinful pleasures. Heart of Jesus, Fount of all purity, have mercy on us.

## ***Prayer of St. Francis***

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace

That where there is hatred, I may bring love;

That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;

That where there is discord, I may bring harmony;

That where there is error, I may bring truth;

That where there is doubt, I may bring faith;

That where there are shadows, I may bring light;

That where there is sadness, I may bring joy;

Lord, grant that I may seek to comfort, than to be comforted;

To understand, than to be understood; To love, than to be loved;

For it is in giving that we receive; It is in forgiving that one is forgiven; It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.

## ***Prayer For The Virtue Of Chastity***

Jesus, Fortress of mankind, You are Immaculate as God and Man! Bless me with Your infinite graces, That I may remain in a state of purity. Strengthen my body, spirit and soul To continually reflect Your chastity. Protect my soul in its daily struggles, Guiding it to ponder on Your Godliness. Defend me from the forces of evil, Those that seek to acquire my soul: I am truly Yours forever and ever. Holy is my King, the Conqueror of sin!

# “Charity”

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have no charity, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal and if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains but have no Charity, I am nothing

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned but have not been Charitable I have gained nothing

Charity is patient and kind; Charity is not jealous or boastful; It is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way It is not irritable or resentful, It does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.

Charity bears all things, believes all things hopes all things, endures all things

Charity never ends  
As for prophecies, they will pass away  
As for tongues, they will cease  
As for knowledge, it will pass away

For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.

So faith, hope, charity abide, these three;  
but the greatest of these is charity. *1 Corinthians 13:1-13 DR*

*Cherish:*

To hold dear: feel or show affection for, cherished her friends  
To keep or cultivate with care and affection, nurture, cherishes his marriage. To entertain or harbor in the mind deeply and resolutely, still cherishes that memory.

*Synonyms for “Cherish”* Adore, love, worship, value, treasure, prize, appreciate, relish, take pleasure in, esteem, attach importance to, to revere

*Antonyms for Cherish:* cold heartedness, hard-heartedness, inhumanity, inhumanness, mercilessness, pitilessness

What is it to extend Charity to someone? Is it to be benevolent; To show goodwill toward or love of humanity; To offer generosity and helpfulness, especially toward the needy or suffering? Or is it just an institution engaged in relief of the poor; Maybe it is public provision for the relief of the needy; Or it could be Lenient judgment of others.



***To “Cherish” someone,  
is to extend endless “Charity” to them.***

# The Prayer of Manasseh

O Lord Almighty, God of our fathers, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob  
and of their righteous posterity; You who has made heaven  
and earth with all their order.

Who has shackled the sea by Your word of command, who has confined  
the deep and sealed it with Your terrible and glorious name; At whom  
all things shudder, and tremble before Your power, For Your  
glorious splendor cannot be borne, and the wrath of  
Your threat to sinners is irresistible;

Yet immeasurable and unsearchable is Your promised mercy, for You  
are the Lord Most High, of great compassion, long-suffering,  
and exceedingly merciful, and compassionate over the evils of men.  
You, O Lord, according to Your great goodness has promised repentance  
and forgiveness to those who have sinned against You; and in the  
multitude of Your mercies, You have appointed repentance  
For sinners, that they may be saved.

Therefore, You, O Lord, God of the righteous, has not appointed  
repentance for the righteous, for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob,  
who did not sin against You, but You have appointed  
repentance for me, who is a sinner.

For the sins I have committed are more in number than the sand of the  
sea; my transgressions are multiplied, O Lord, they are multiplied!  
I am unworthy to look up and see the height of heaven because  
of the multitude of my iniquities.

I am weighted down with many an iron fetter, so that I am rejected  
because of my sins, and I have no relief; for I have provoked Your  
wrath and have done what is evil in Your sight, setting up  
abominations and multiplying offenses.

And now I bend the knee of my heart, beseeching You for Your  
kindness. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I  
know my transgressions.

I earnestly beseech You, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me! Do not destroy  
me with my transgressions! Do not be angry with me forever or lay up  
evil for me; do not condemn me to the depths of the earth. For You,  
O Lord, art the God of those who repent, and in me You will  
manifest Your goodness; for, unworthy as I am, You will  
save me in Your great mercy, and I will praise You  
continually all the days of my life. For all the host of  
heaven sings Your praise, and Yours is the glory forever

**Amen.**

*Manasseh was a wicked king who ruled about 698/687-642 B.C. After Manasseh suffers divine punishment in the form of exile. He repents, changes course and is forgiven.*





### *Prayer to Our Lady of Perpetual Help*

Behold, O Mother of Perpetual Help, at your feet a wretched sinner, who has recourse to you and trusts in you. O Mother of mercy, have pity on me; I hear all men call you the refuge and hope of sinners: be therefore my refuge and my hope.

Help me for the love of Jesus Christ: hold out your hand to a fallen wretch, who commends himself to you and dedicates himself to be your servant forever. I praise and thank God, who of His great mercy has given me this confidence in you, a sure pledge of my eternal salvation.

Alas, it is only too true that in the past I have fallen miserably, because I did not come to you.

I know that with your help I shall conquer; I know that you will help me, if I commend myself to you; but I am fearful lest in the occasions of sin I shall forget to call upon you and so I shall be lost. This grace, then, do I ask of you; for this I implore you, as much as I can and know how to do; namely, that in the assaults of hell I may ever run to your protection and may I say to you: Mary, help me; Mother of Perpetual Help, permit me not to lose my God.

### *Say three Hail Mary's here...*

O Mother of Perpetual Help, grant me ever to be able to call upon your powerful name, since your name is the help of the living and the salvation of the dying.

Ah, Mary most pure, Mary most sweet, grant that your name from this day forth may be to me the very breath of life. Dear Lady, delay not to come to my assistance whenever I call upon you; for in all the temptations that assail me, in all the necessities that befall me, I will never leave off calling upon you, ever repeating: Mary, Mary.



What comfort, what sweetness, what confidence, what tenderness fills my soul at the sound of your name, at the very thought of you! I give thanks to our Lord, who for my sake He has given you a name so sweet, so lovable, so mighty. But I am not content merely to speak your name; I would utter it for very love of you; it is my desire that love should ever remind me to name you, Mother of Perpetual Help.

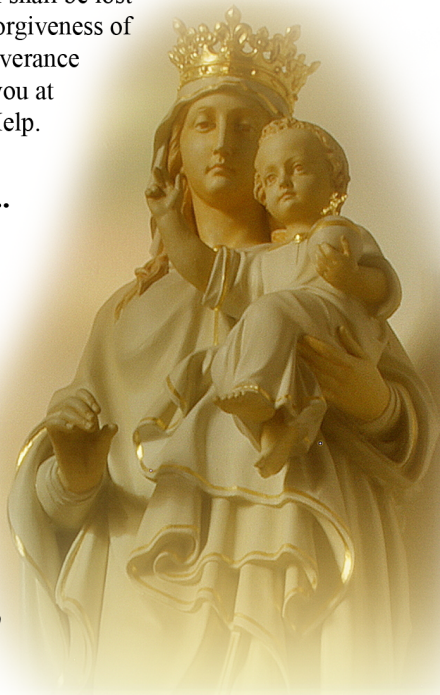
***Say three Hail Mary's here...***

O Mother of Perpetual Help, you are the dispenser of every grace that God grants us in our misery; it is for this cause that He has made you so powerful, so rich so kind, that you, the mightiest, assist us in our miseries. You are the advocate of the most wretched and abandoned sinners, if they but come unto you; come once more to my assistance, for I commend myself to you. Into your hands I place my eternal salvation; to you I entrust my soul. Enroll me among your most faithful servants; take me under your protection and it is enough for me: yes, for if you protect me, I shall fear nothing; not even my sins, for you will obtain for me their pardon and remission; not the evil spirits, for you are mightier than all the powers of hell; not even Jesus, my Judge, for He is appeased by a single prayer from you. I fear only that through my own negligence I may forget to recommend myself to you and so I shall be lost. My dear Lady, obtain for me the forgiveness of my sins, love for Jesus, final perseverance and the grace to have recourse to you at all times, O Mother of Perpetual Help.

***Say three Hail Mary's here...***

O my perpetual help all heartache and all love, give me the gold of your picture, the light of the star on your veil, the tenderness in your eyes, the shelter of your mantle, the treasure in your arms, and I give you my heart forever, and all its love. Amen.

***Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
Pray for Us!***



# *Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*



O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I fly, I come to Thee, throwing myself into the arms of Thy tender mercy. Thou art my sure refuge my unfailing and only hope Thou has a remedy for all my evils, relief for all my miseries, reparation for all my faults, Thou canst supply for what is wanting in me in order to obtain fully the graces that I ask for myself and others Thou art for me, and for us all, the infallible inexhaustible source of light, of strength, of perseverance, peace and consolation. I am certain that my importunity will never weary Thee; certain too, that Thou wilt never cease to aid, to protect, to love me, because Thy love for me, O Divine Heart, is infinite. Have mercy on me then, O Heart of Jesus, and on all that I recommend to Thee according to Thy own mercy, and do with us, for us, and in us, whatsoever Thou wilt for we abandon ourselves to Thee with the full, entire confidence and conviction that Thou will never abandon us either intime or eternity.

***Amen***

# *Prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary*

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, Heavenly beauty and splendor of the Father, You are the most valued Heavenly treasure.

New Eve, immaculate in soul, spirit and body, Created of the Godlyseed by the Spirit of God,

You are the spiritual Mother of mankind.

Pure Virgin, full of grace then and now, Your whole being was raised Heavenly in full glory, To be elevated above all the Hosts within the Kingdom of God.

O Heavenly Mother, Queen of Heaven and earth, I recognize the glory of your highest title, The Immaculate Heart of Mary! Loving Mother, dispenser of endless blessings, You who continuously intercedes on our behalf, Please present my need before your loving Son Jesus. (Make your special request here). O Immaculate Heart of Mary, I know that you are now presenting my need before Jesus, For you have never turned away those in dire need. Mother dearest, I await your favorable answer, Submitting myself to the Divine will of the Lord, For all glories are His forever and ever.



## *Amen*

*A Universal Prayer*  
*For all things Necessary for salvation*  
*Attributed to Pope Clement XI*

O My God, I believe in You; do You strengthen my faith. All my hopes are in You; do you secure them. I love You; teach me to love You daily more and more. I am sorry that I have offended You; may You increase my sorrow.

I adore You as my first beginning; I aspire after You as my last end. I give You thanks as my constant benefactor; I call upon You as my sovereign protector.

Grant, O my God! to conduct me by Your wisdom, to restrain me by Your justice, to comfort me by Your mercy, to defend me by Your power.

To You I desire to consecrate all my thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings; that henceforward I may think of You, speak of You, refer all my actions to Your greater glory, and Suffer willingly whatever You shall appoint.

Lord, I desire that in all things your will may be done because It is Your will, and in the manner that You will, and As long as You will.

I beg of You to enlighten my understanding, to inflame my will, to purify my body, and to sanctify my soul.

Grant that I not be puffed up with pride, moved by flattery, deceived by the world or duped by the devil

Give me the grace to purify my memory, to bridle my tongue, to restrain my eyes, and to mortify my senses.

Give me strength, O my God! to expiate my offenses, to overcome my temptations, to subdue my passions, and to acquire the virtues proper for my state of life.



Fill my heart with tender affection for Your goodness, hatred of my faults, love of my neighbor, and contempt of the world.

Let me always remember to be submissive to my superiors, condescending to my inferiors, faithful to my friends, and charitable to my enemies.

Grant, O Jesus that I may remember your precepts and example, by loving my enemies, bearing with injuries, doing good to them that persecute me and praying for them that slander me

Assist me to overcome sensuality by mortification, avarice by alms-deeds, anger by meekness, and tepidity by devotion.

O my God! make me prudent in my undertakings, courageous in dangers, patient in affliction, and humble in prosperity.

Grant that I may be ever attentive at my prayers, temperate at my meals, diligent in my employments, and constant in my resolutions.

Let my conscience be ever upright and pure, my exterior modest, my conversation edifying, and live my life according to rule.

Assist me, that I may continually labor to overcome nature, to correspond with Your grace, to keep Your Commandments, and to work out my salvation.

Help me obtain holiness of life by a sincere confession of my sins, by a devout reception of the body of Christ, by continual recollection of mind, and by a pure intention of heart.

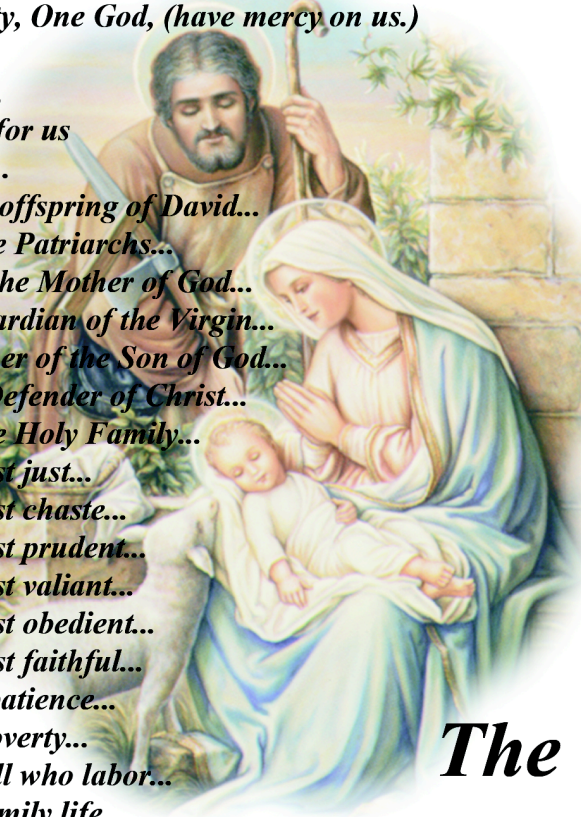
Discover to me, O my God! the nothingness of this world, the greatness of Heaven, the shortness of time, and the length of eternity.

Grant that I may prepare for death; that I may fear Thy judgments, that I may escape hell, and in the end obtain Heaven, Through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

*Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ have mercy on us.  
Lord, have mercy on us.  
Christ, hear us, Christ, graciously hear us.*

*God the Father of Heaven, (have mercy on us.)  
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, (have mercy on us.)  
God the Holy Spirit, (have mercy on us.)  
Holy Trinity, One God, (have mercy on us.)*



*Holy Mary,  
.....Pray for us  
St. Joseph...  
Renowned offspring of David...  
Light of the Patriarchs...  
Spouse of the Mother of God...  
Chaste Guardian of the Virgin...  
Foster-father of the Son of God...  
Sedulous Defender of Christ...  
Head of the Holy Family...  
Joseph most just...  
Joseph most chaste...  
Joseph most prudent...  
Joseph most valiant...  
Joseph most obedient...  
Joseph most faithful...  
Mirror of patience...  
Lover of poverty...  
Model of all who labor...  
Glory of family life...  
Protector of virgins...  
Pillar of families...  
Consolation of the afflicted...  
Hope of the sick...  
Patron of the dying...  
Terror of the demons...  
Protector of Holy Church...*

**The  
Litany  
of  
St. Joseph**

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,  
Spare us, O Lord.*

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,  
Spare us, O Lord.*

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.*

*Have mercy On us.*

*He made him the lord of his household*

*And prince over all his possessions.*



*Let us pray,  
O God, in your  
ineffable providence  
you were pleased to choose  
Blessed Joseph to be the spouse  
of your most holy Mother; grant, we beg You, that  
we may be worthy to have him for our intercessor in  
heaven whom on earth we venerate as our Protector:*

*You who live and reign forever and ever.*

*Saint Joseph, pray for us.*

## LITANY OF HUMILITY

*O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, hear me.  
From the desire of being esteemed,  
deliver me, Jesus....*



*From the desire of being loved,  
From the fear of being wronged,  
From the desire of being praised,  
From the desire of being extolled,  
From the desire of being honored.  
From the desire of being approved,  
From the desire of being preferred,  
From the desire of being consulted,  
From the fear of being despised,  
From the fear of being ridiculed,  
From the fear of being forgotten,  
From the fear of being suspected,  
From the fear of being humiliated,  
From the fear of suffering rebukes,  
From the fear of being calumniated,*

*That others may be loved more than I.  
**Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.***

*That others may be esteemed more than I,  
That in the opinion of the world,  
others may increase, and I may decrease,  
That others may be chosen and I set aside,  
That others may be praised and I unnoticed,  
That others may be preferred to me in everything  
That others may become holier than I,  
provided that I may become as holy as I should.*

*- Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930)*



# ***A Prayer of Thanksgiving***

**Thank You O God, for hearing my prayers  
and granting my request.**

**Thank You for all the kindness You  
have shown me.**

**Thank You Father for Your great  
love in giving me life,**

**For Your great patience in preserving  
me despite my sinfulness,**

**For Your protection in the past and for the  
opportunity to serve You in the future.**

**Thank You, Lord Jesus, for keeping  
me countless times from  
sin and death.**

**Thank You Lord for Your toils in Your life,  
the sufferings of Your passion, and  
Your victorious resurrection.**

**Thank You O Holy Spirit of God, for bestowing  
so many graces upon my soul and for  
having so frequently renewed  
Your life within me.**

**May my life from now on, be a sign of  
my gratefulness, Amen**

# THINGS GOD WON'T ASK

## *The Honorable Man*

God won't ask what kind of car you drove.....  
*He'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have a ride.*

God won't ask the square footage of your house.....  
*He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.*

God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet.....  
*He'll ask how many you helped to clothe.*

God won't ask what your highest salary was.....  
*He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.*

God won't ask what your job title was.....  
*He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.*

God won't ask how many friends you had.....  
*He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.*

God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived.....  
*He'll ask how you treated your neighbors.*

God won't ask about the color of your skin.....  
*He'll ask about the content of your character.*

*An "Honorable Man" does what is "Honorable"  
even when no one else is around.*

# *Stress management*

A lecturer, was explaining stress management to an audience, he raised a glass of water and asked, "how heavy is this glass of water?" The answers called out varied. The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it." "If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. "In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on." As with the glass of water, you have to put it, down for a while and rest before holding it again.

When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden."

"So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can." Relax; pick them up later after you've rested. Life is short. Enjoy it! and then he shared some ways of dealing with the burdens of life:

- \* Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
- \* Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- \* Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- \* Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- \* If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- \* If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- \* It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.

- \* Never buy a car you can't push.
- \* Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- \* Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- \* The second mouse gets the cheese.
- \* When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- \* Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- \* You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- \* We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.
- \* A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

And if that doesn't help turn to Jesus  
*(Well turn to him even if it did help)*

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light



***Matthew 11:29***

# Reflections

## Purity

"It is necessary that temptations should happen; for who shall be crowned but he that shall lawfully have fought, and how shall a man fight if there be none to attack him?" *St. Bernard*

"We must be pure. I do not speak merely of purity of the sense. We must observe great purity in our will, in our intentions, in all our actions. To possess purity of life in this, all consists." "We can gain nothing from God but by purity, and by holiness. God does great things only by pure souls." *St. Peter Julian Eymard*

"Guard your eyes that they may not look upon anything contrary to purity; your ears, that they may not listen to evil conversation; your mind, by banishing from it all suggestive thoughts; your heart, by stifling impure desires at their very birth." *St. John Baptist De la Salle*

"Where Christ is, there modesty is found." *St. Gregory of the Nazianzen*

"Holy purity, the queen of virtues, the angelic virtue, is a jewel so precious that those who possess it become like the angels of God in heaven, even though clothed in mortal flesh." *St. John Bosco*

What does the word "purity" mean to me? How do I demonstrate it? (Consider thoughts, words, and deeds.) With regard to purity, would someone describe me as an angel "clothed in mortal flesh?" Why or why not? What am I willing to do about it?

## Humility

"You're not humbled when you humble yourself, but when you are humbled by others and you bear it for Christ." *St. Josemaria Escriva*

"If I love Jesus, I ought to resemble Him. If I love Jesus, I ought to love what He loves, what He prefers to all else: humility." *St. Peter Julian Eymard*

"Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent." *St. John of the Cross*

To what extent would I be called a "complainer?" How can patience help me overcome this? "There is no remedy so powerful against the heat of concupiscence as the remembrance of our Savior's Passion. In all my difficulties, I never found anything so efficacious as the wounds of Christ. In them, I sleep secure. From them, I derive new life." *St. Augustine*

By virtue of our baptism, we are called to enter into solidarity with our brother and sisters throughout the world. At no time is this solidarity more important than when our brethren in Christ experience suffering and hardship. We are exhorted to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, ransom the captive, harbor the harbor-less, and bury the dead. When we make a promise to God, we never know exactly how it will be fulfilled, but God will give us the opportunity.

### ***Forgiveness***

"For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son that everyone who believed in Him might not perish but have life everlasting." John 3:16 The quote from Scripture tells us that God loves everyone. If God loves everyone, what right do I have to hold on to hatred and resentment? Am I willing to forgive and to ask for forgiveness? With whom should I begin? How does seeking forgiveness from others help to smooth off rough edges?

"You are not a saint because you keep the rules and are blameless; you are a saint if you live in the real world, going out and loving the real people God has put into your life." *Sister Wendy Beckett*

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. "Psalm 51: 10,17 This passage gives us the two characteristics necessary for true contrition - a broken and contrite heart. Is there someone whom I have offended? Are these two characteristics present in me in relation to that person? In light of this, what should I do? A man must always be ready, for death comes when and where God wills it. *St. John Neumann*

### ***Hope***

"God is not a deceiver that he should offer to support us, and then, when we lean upon Him, should slip away from us." *St. Augustine*

"Wait upon the Lord: wait upon Him patiently, wait upon Him by avoiding all sin. He will come; doubt it not. To this firm hope, join the practice of virtue, and even in this life you will begin to taste the ineffable joys of Paradise." *St. Bernard*

"We need to smooth off the rough edges a little more each day to get rid of the defects in our own lives with a spirit of penance, with small mortifications. Jesus Christ will later make up for whatever is still lacking." *St. Josemaria Escriva*

The Creator of the universe awaits the prayer of one poor little soul to save a multitude of others, redeemed like her at the price of His Blood."

**St. Therese of Lisieux** St. Therese is saying that God is waiting for my prayer so that a multitude of others may be saved through the Blood of His Son. Who would He choose for me to pray for today? What is my response?

"The heart of God invited all to put it to the proof. The more He gives, the more He desires to give. He loves to see the trust that makes us persist in knocking unceasingly." *Blessed Placid Riccardi Trust in God yields hope. Hope in God yields confidence. Confidence in God yields assurance that He will meet our every need. Read Matthew 7: 7-11. How does Blessed Placid's quote reflect the wisdom of Scripture?*

"Abandonment requires us to rest in Jesus in all the circumstances of our life, without exception, and it has its foundation in divine love." *Father Hubert*

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not abandoned at all" and 10 being "completely abandoned," how would I rate my abandonment to Jesus of my life's circumstances? What makes me hold on? What does this tell me about my understanding of divine love?

***"Hope is patience with the lamp lit."*** *Tertullian*

## ***Patience***

"Be patient with everyone, but above all with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them every day begin the task anew." *St. Francis de Sales*

"Nothing is more pleasing to God than unshaken faith and confidence in the midst of darkness. Make a great practice of acts of confidence even when you feel nothing. It is just in these moments of dryness and darkness that these acts are most meritorious." *Blessed Columba Marmion*

In the face of seemingly impossible circumstances, do I patiently endure with hope or do I give in to discouragement and fear? What one spiritual strategy can I employ to keep my "lamp lit?"

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O virgin of virgins, my Mother; to you do I come, before you, I stand,

sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer me. Amen. "With Christians, a poetical view of things is a duty. We are bid to color all things with hues of faith, to see a divine meaning in every event."

*Cardinal John Henry Newman*

*Do I "color all things with hues of faith?" Do I see "a divine meaning in every event?" If I were to do so, how would this encourage the virtue of patience in me? What one situation or circumstance am I presently facing that can give me this opportunity?*

" God gives us the vision, then He takes us down to the valley to batter us into the shape of the vision, and it is in the valley that so many of us faint and give way. Every vision will be made real if we will have patience." *Oswald Chambers*

How have I done in my "valley" experiences? Has patience kept me steadfast or have I given way so that God's desires for me have not been accomplished?

"Never rebuke while you are still indignant about a fault committed - wait until the next day, or even longer. And then, calmly, and with a purer intention, make your reprimand. You will gain more by a friendly word than by a three hour quarrel." *St. Josemaira Escriva*

For the grace to do exactly that! May God grant me mercy, patience, and wisdom."An evil thought defiles the soul when it is deliberate and is consented to. Our Lord placed evil thoughts at the head of all crimes, because they are their principle and source." *St. John Baptist de la Salle*

## ***Charity***

"At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love." *St. John of the Cross*

How much do I love God? What about my life reflects the reality of my love? Where does selfishness hold me bound? Lack of forgiveness? Personal sin?" I assure you, on judgment day people will be held accountable for every unguarded word they speak." *Matthew 12:36* Ouch!

How many unguarded or idle words have I spoken in my life? How many did I speak yesterday? How many have I spoken already today? Lord, put a sentinel at my mouth and a guard around my lips that I may hold my tongue when it ought to be held. Amen.





# *The Power of Unceasing Prayer*

## **1 Thessalonians 5:16-19**

St. Paul's entreaty to the Thessalonians to "Pray Constantly put *"The Pilgrim"* on the path of his quest. On his journey He stopped at the next village and asked this of a man. "I heard you are a devout and wise man and I came in the name of God to ask you to explain to me the meaning of the words of St. Paul, "Pray constantly", How is it possible to pray constantly?"

The gentleman was silent for a moment then looked at him and said. "Ceaseless interior prayer is a constant aspiration and yearning of the spirit of the man toward God.

To succeed in this it is necessary to ask God frequently that he teach you to continually pray. Pray often and fervently and prayer itself will reveal this mystery to you.

To pray unceasing is a true gift from God that takes a great deal of self-discipline and sacrifice but the comfort and solace received is unmeasurable

The pilgrim became accustomed to saying the Jesus prayer, " O lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. Amen." over 12,000 times a day every day.

The blessings we can receive by filling all our ambient thoughts with the Jesus prayer is unending. Learn the "Jesus Prayer of the Castus Society" and say it often. The series of prayers are designed to invoke certain thoughts. When you can't say it formally, recite the Jesus prayer mentally over and over and over again. In other words unceasingly.

You will be surprised and thankful, for how often your thoughts at any given moment or at the end of the day are now filled with the Jesus prayer.

To experience the Pilgrim's entire story read,  
***"The Way of the Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues his Way"***

Start with the sign of the cross, then on the crucifix say the Our Father

Then Say The “Suscript”  
the offering prayer of  
St. Ignatius on the first bead  
*“Take, O Lord, and receive all  
my liberty my memory, my  
understanding, and my whole  
will. You have given me all  
that I am and all that I  
possess: I surrender it all to  
you that you may dispose of it  
according to your will. Give me  
only Your love and Your grace;  
with these I will be rich enough, and  
will have no more to desire. Amen.”*

Then Say Three times St. Margaret Mary Alacouque’s  
Prayer to the sacred heart *“O heart of love I  
put my trust in you. For I fear all things  
from my own weakness, but hope for all  
things from your goodness, Amen.”*

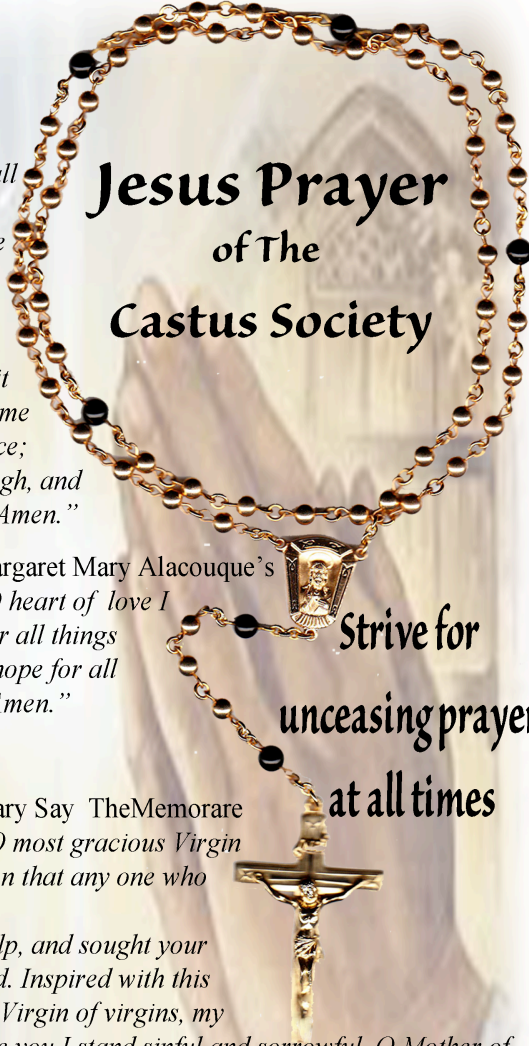
Then say the Glory be

Then on the Medallion of Mary Say TheMemorare  
of St. Bernard *“Remember, O most gracious Virgin  
Mary, that never was it known that any one who  
fled to your  
protection, implored your help, and sought your  
intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this  
confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my  
Mother, to you I come, before you I stand sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of  
the Word Incarnate! despise not my petitions, but, in your mercy, hear and  
answer me. Amen.”*

Then say The Jesus Prayer ”O’Lord Jesus Christ, Son  
of the living God, Have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen” 10Times.

Then on EachMystery bead Say the invocation of Our Lady of Fatima  
*“O My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all  
souls to Heaven, especially those who are in most need of your mercy*

Then repeat Jesus prayers and invocations 1 more cycle.  
Then close with an Our father. Hail Marv and a Glorv be.



## Jesus Prayer of The Castus Society

Strive for  
unceasing prayer  
at all times

# ***Our Daily Commitment***

## ***My Morning Prayer***

**O my God, I adore You, and give you thanks for all Your benefits, and especially for having preserved me during the past night. I love you with my whole heart, and I offer to You whatever I shall do or suffer in the course of this day, in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ and of Mary and with an intention of gaining all the indulgences I can.**

**I will endeavor, by the assistance of your holy grace, to avoid all sin; and I ask You, for the love of Jesus, to pardon me my past sins, and to grant me perseverance in virtue. I will endeavor, particularly in such things as shall be contrary to my inclinations, to daily put on the armor of God and to unite myself to Your blessed will, saying: “Lord, Your will be done! O Jesus, extend Your hands over me this day! Most holy Mary, protect me! Faithful guardian, my good angel, and you my holy advocates, saints in heaven, assist me!” Amen**

## ***My Nightly Reflection***

**Lord, I humbly come before You at the end of my day; I thank You for all the favors I have received. Lord, please, You can create me anew.**

**Come Holy Spirit into my life, and into my heart. Enlighten me, so that I can know myself better, so as to be able to give myself fully to God.**

**God give me the grace to see myself as You see me, my defects and my virtues. Help me to see the pain that my sins have caused God and my brothers and sisters. Give me the grace, and the courage to confess and to change the sinful patterns of my life.**



*Have I prayed today?*

*Did I struggle to avoid distractions in my prayer?*

*How have I offended God?*

*Have I been: envious, proud, lazy, gluttonous, lustful, angry,  
and covetous?*

*Have I cared for my family?*

*Have I prayed for them?*

*Have I assisted them in whatever way I can with their  
temporal necessities?*

*Have I helped my friends?*

*Did I disrespect authority?*

*Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts or feelings?*

*Have I been honest?*

*Did I do my work well?*

*Did I waste time?*

*What have I done right?*

*How can I do it better?*

**Lord, I offer You my repentance; I ask for Your forgiveness, I beg for Your grace and encouragement to amend my life and to avoid my faults especially\_\_\_\_\_. To stay away from temptation and I will make all efforts, to practice virtue and to avoid the near occasion of sin.**

***Say an Act of Contrition, the Confiteor, or Psalm 51.***

**Protect us, Lord, as we stay awake; watch over us as we sleep, that awake, we may keep watch with Christ, and asleep, rest in His peace. Keep us united with Your Son in his death and burial so that we may rise to new life with him. O Lord grant us a restful night and a peaceful death. Lord, I thank You for today, help me to be a better man tomorrow, Amen.**

# ***Our Monthly Commitment***

## **An Exhaustive Examination of Conscience**

A good examination of conscience can be a great help in making a new start in the life of faith. We use an examination of conscience to help call to mind our sins and failings during a period of quiet reflection. It's important for a good examination of conscience to be thorough. This will help us learn about things that we may not be aware of. It's also a chance to develop our conscience.

When we make an examination it is important to set aside some quiet time for reflection. Start by praying to the Holy Spirit, asking for help in making a good examination. As you go through the items on this list, honestly reflect on your behavior for each item. An examination of conscience traditionally follows an outline of the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Catholic Church. If after your examination you find that you are in need of the sacrament of confession you are obliged to confess only mortal sins; you can obtain forgiveness for your venial sins through sacrifices, acts of charity, worthy receipt of Communion. If you are in doubt about whether a sin is mortal or venial, mention your doubt to the confessor. Remember also, confession of venial sins is very helpful for avoiding sin and advancing toward Heaven.

### **Necessary conditions for a sin to be mortal:**

1. Serious Matter
2. Sufficient Reflection
3. Full Consent of the Will

### **Preliminary Considerations:**

Have I...

Ever deliberately failed to confess a serious sin, or willfully disguised or hidden such a sin?

*Note: The deliberate concealing of a mortal sin invalidates one's confession and makes the person guilty of another mortal sin. Remember that the confession is private*

*under the Seal of Confession, i.e., it is a mortal sin for the priest to reveal the matter of one's confession to anyone else.*

Been guilty of irreverence for this sacrament by failing to examine my conscience carefully?

Failed to do the penance given to me by the priest?

Do I have any habits of serious sin to confess first (e.g. impurity, drunkenness, etc.)?

### **First Commandment:**

*I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. (Including sins against Faith, Hope and Charity)*

Have I...

...loved someone or something more than God (money, power, sex, ambition, opinion etc.)?

...neglected to nourish and protect my faith?

...failed to learn about the faith as taught in the catechism (ex. Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Sacraments, etc.)?

...deliberately doubted or denied any of the teachings of the Church?

...intended to weaken my faith reading heretical, blasphemous or anti-Catholic literature?

...practiced any superstitions to control people or events (e.g. carried "lucky" charms, avoided "unlucky" actions) or treated Catholic devotions as superstitions?

...been involved in astrology or the occult? (séances, Ouija boards, fortune telling, worship of Satan, etc.)

...omitted religious duties or practices through motives of human respect?

...been faithful to my daily prayers?

...abused the Sacraments in any way or received them irreverently? Have I made fun of God, Our Lady, the Saints, the Church, the Sacraments, and other holy things?

...been indifferent with regard to my Catholic Faith — believing one can be saved in any religion, or that all religions are equal?

...denied the faith by taking part in any non-Catholic worship (e.g. receiving communion at another church)?

...presumed on God's mercy, committed a sin in expectation of

forgiveness, or asked for forgiveness without turning away from sin?

...despaired of God's mercy, about my salvation, or the forgiveness of my sins?

...hated or resented God?

...rejected the Catholic faith, joined another Christian denomination, joined or practiced another religion, or joined a group forbidden to Catholics (Freemasons, communists, etc.)?

...refused to accept what God has revealed as true, or what the Catholic Church proposes for belief?

...formally left the Catholic Church?

...denied the existence of God?

...accepted anything opposed to a sound faith?

...deliberately misled others about doctrine or the faith?

...let someone or something influence my choices more than God?

...hidden a serious sin or told a lie in confession?

## **Second Commandment**

*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*

Have I ...

...sworn by God's name falsely, rashly, or in slight and trivial matters?

...murmured or complained against God (blasphemy)?

...cursed myself, others, or any creature?

...intentionally angered others so as to make them swear or blaspheme God?

...used the name of God in cursing or blasphemy?

...failed to keep vows or promises that I have made to God?

...spoken about the Faith, the Church, the saints, or sacred things with irreverence, hatred, or defiance?

...watched television or movies, or listened to music that treated God, the Church, the saints, or sacred things irreverently?

...used vulgar, suggestive, or obscene speech?

...belittled others?

...misused places or objects set apart for the worship of God?

...committed perjury (e.g. breaking an oath or lying under oath)?

...blamed God for my failings?



### **Third Commandment**

*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.*

Have I...

...missed Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of obligation (through own fault without sufficient reason)?

...been late for Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of obligation, or left early through my own fault?

...willingly made others miss Mass on Sundays or Holy Days of obligation leave early or be late for Mass?

...been willfully distracted during Mass?

...done or commanded unnecessary servile work on Sunday or Holy Days of Obligation?

...shopped, labored, or conducted business unnecessarily on Sunday or other Holy Days of Obligation?

...neglected to set time aside each day for personal prayer to God?

...committed a sacrilege against the Blessed Sacrament?

...behaved disrespectfully in church?

...had spiritually unfruitful conversation, behavior, dress in church, or been guilty of great irreverence in church?

...received a sacrament (other than baptism, confession, or extreme unction) while in the state of mortal sin?

...not attended to taking my children to Mass?

...knowingly eaten meat on a forbidden day (or not fasting on a fast day)?

...eaten or drank one hour before receiving Communion (other than water or for medical need)?

### **Fourth Commandment:**

*Honor thy father and thy mother.*

Have I...

...been disobedient or disrespectful to my parents, neglected or refused to aid them in their wants, or obeyed their last will? If still under my parents' care, have I obeyed all that my parents reasonably asked of me?

...neglected the needs of my parents in their old age or in their time of need?

...(if still in school) obeyed the reasonable demands of my teachers?

...lived in humble obedience to those who legitimately exercise authority over me?

...broken the law?

...supported or voted for a politician whose positions are opposed to the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church?

...shown irreverence to others in positions of authority?

...maligned or insulted priests or others consecrated to God?

...failed in due reverence to aged persons?

...mistreated my spouse or my children?

...been disobedient or disrespectful to my husband?

### **Regarding my children:**

Have I...

...neglected their material needs?

...failed to care for their early baptism? \*(See below.)

...failed to care for their proper religious education?

...allowed them to neglect their religious duties?

...allowed them to date/go steady without the prospect of marriage within the near future? (St. Alphonsus says 1-year maximum.)

...neglected to encourage my children to regularly frequent the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion?

...failed to educate my children in a way that corresponds to my religious convictions?

...failed to provide my children with a positive, prudent, and personalized education in the Catholic teaching on human sexuality?

...been a poor example to my children of how to live the Catholic Faith?

...neglected to pray with and for my children?

...failed to supervise the company they keep?

...failed to discipline them when they need it?

...scandalized them by arguing with my spouse in front of my children?

...scandalized them by cursing or swearing in front of them?

Guarded modesty in the home?

...permitted them to wear immodest clothing (mini skirts; tight pants, dresses, or sweaters; see-through blouses, short-shorts, revealing swim suits, etc.)?

...denied their freedom to marry or follow a religious vocation?

## **Fifth Commandment**

*Thou shalt not kill.*

Have I...

...procured, desired, or hastened the death or bodily injury of anyone?

...borne hatred, joined a hate group, or wished evil on another?

...oppressed anyone?

...desired or sought revenge, or hoped something bad would happen to someone?

...caused enmity between others?

...been mean to, quarreled with, or willfully hurt someone?

...intended or attempted to injure or mistreat others?

...taken pleasure in anyone's misfortunes?

...been jealous or envious of anyone?

...procured or attempted to procure an abortion, or counseled anyone else to do so?

...mutilated my body unnecessarily in any way (including voluntary sterilization)?

...entertained thoughts of suicide, desired to commit suicide, or attempted suicide?

...supported, promoted, or encouraged the practice of assisted suicide or "mercy" killing?

...abused alcohol or drugs, become drunk, or used illicit drugs?

...sold or given drugs to others to use for non-therapeutic purposes?

...driven recklessly or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?

...used tobacco immoderately?

...overeaten or do I neglect to eat properly (i.e. nutritious foods in healthy portions)?

...failed to correct in charity?

...harmed anyone's soul, especially children, by giving scandal through bad example?

...harmed my own soul by intentionally and without necessity exposing myself to temptations (e.g. bad TV, bad music, immodest dress, etc.)

...nurtured a grudge against someone?

- ...unjustly and intentionally killed a human being?
- ...deliberately desired to kill an innocent human being?
- ...unjustly inflicted bodily harm on another person?
- ...unjustly threatened another person with bodily harm?
- ...verbally or emotionally abused another person?
- ...been prejudiced or unjustly discriminated against others because of their race, color, nationality, sex, or religion?
- ...purposely provoked another by teasing or nagging?
- ...recklessly endangered my life or health, or that of another, by my actions or inactions?
- ...encouraged others to sin by giving scandal?
- ...helped another to commit a mortal sin (through advice, placing them in the near occasion of sin, etc.?)
- ...indulged in serious anger?
- ...refused to control my temper?
- ...been unforgiving to others when mercy or pardon was requested?
- ...treated animals cruelly, causing them to suffer or die needlessly?

### **Sixth and Ninth Commandments**

*Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.*

Have I...

- ...deprived my spouse of the marital right without just cause?
- ...claimed my own marital right without concern for my spouse?
- ...abused my marriage rights in any other way?
- ...used artificial or unnatural means of birth control (the pill, condoms, sponges, diaphragm, early withdrawal, etc.)?
- ...refused to be open to conception without just cause (Catechism, 2368)?
- ...participated in immoral techniques to get pregnant (e.g. in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood)?
- ...sterilized my sex organs for contraceptive purposes?
- ...touched or embraced another impurely?
- ...engaged in prolonged or passionate kissing with someone who is not my spouse?
- ...engaged in sexual foreplay (petting) reserved for marriage?
- ...been impure with myself (masturbated)?
- ...willfully entertained or taken pleasure in impure thoughts?

...indulged in lustful desires for anyone, or willfully desired to see or do anything impure?  
...willfully indulged in any sexual pleasure whether complete or incomplete?  
...been an occasion of sin for others by wearing tight or otherwise revealing and immodest clothing?  
...deliberately or carelessly done anything to provoke or occasion impure thoughts or desires in others?  
...watched suggestive movies, TV programs, read indecent literature or looked at bad pictures?  
...made use of pornography or permitted my children to do so?  
...used indecent language in conversation or music, or told indecent stories or jokes?  
...willingly listened to such conversation, music, stories, or jokes?  
...boasted of my sins or taken delight in past sins?  
...been in lewd company?  
...consented to impure glances?  
...neglected to control my imagination?  
...neglected in praying at once to banish such bad thoughts and temptations?  
...avoided laziness, gluttony, idleness, and the occasions of impurity?  
...attended immodest dances or indecent plays?  
...unnecessarily remained alone in the company of someone of the opposite sex?  
...practiced the virtue of chastity?  
...given in to lust (the desire for sexual pleasure unrelated to spousal love in marriage)?  
...deliberately caused male climax outside of normal sexual intercourse (Catechism, 2366)?  
...committed adultery (sexual relations with a married person or with someone other than my spouse)?  
...committed incest (sexual relations with a relative or in-law)?  
...committed fornication (sexual relations with the opposite sex when neither party is married)?  
...committed rape?  
...preyed upon children or youth for my sexual pleasure?

...engaged in unnatural sexual activities (e.g. anal sex, homosexual acts, bestiality, sex with more than one person, sex with an inanimate object)?

...engaged in prostitution or paid for the services of a prostitute?

...seduced someone or allowed myself to be seduced?

...made uninvited and unwelcome sexual advances toward another?

...been living in a valid and licit marriage according to the laws of the Catholic Church?

...abandoned my spouse and family by separation or divorce?

...kept company with someone whom I cannot marry in the Catholic Church?

...given scandal by living with a member of the opposite sex without the benefit of a marriage blessed by the Catholic Church?

...entered into marriage with more than one person at the same time?

**Note Well:** *Do not be afraid to tell the priest any impure sin you may have committed. Do not hide or try to disguise any such sin. The priest is there to help you and forgive you. Nothing you say will shock him; so do not be afraid, no matter how ashamed you might be.*

## **Seventh and Tenth Commandments**

*Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.*  
Have I...

...stolen anything? What or how much?

...failed to make restitution for my stealing, cheating, and frauds? (*Ask the priest how to go about making restitution: returning to the owner what you unjustly took from him/her.*)

...deliberately defaced, destroyed, or lost another's property?

...negligently spoiled anyone's property?

...been negligent in the stewardship of other people's money or goods?

...cheated or defrauded others?

...squandered money in compulsive gambling?

...refused or neglected to pay any debts?

...acquired anything known to be stolen?

- ...refused to return things borrowed?
- ...refused to honor my part of a contract?
- ...refused to make good on a debt?
- ...cheated on a test, taxes, sports, games, or in business?
- ...cheated my employer of an honest day's work?
- ...refused or neglected to help anyone in urgent need?
- ...been envious or jealous of another because I don't have what they have?
- ...been stingy?
- ...been grasping and avaricious, placing too great importance upon material goods and comforts?
- ...set my heart earthly possessions, not on the true treasures of heaven?
- ...envied others on account of their possessions?
- ...tried to live in a spirit of Gospel poverty and simplicity?
- ...given generously to others in need?
- ...considered that God has provided me with money so that I might use it to benefit others, as well as for my own legitimate needs?
- ...enslaved myself to a consumer mentality?
- ...practiced the works of mercy?
- ...made a false claim to an insurance company?

### **Eighth Commandment**

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

Have I...

- ...rashly judged anyone (i.e. believed firmly, without sufficient evidence, that a person was guilty of some moral defect or crime)?
- ...committed detraction (injuring the good name of another by revealing true, but hidden, faults)?
- ...disclosed another's sins?
- ...been guilty of tale-bearing, (i.e. reporting something unfavorable said of someone by another so as to create enmity between them)?
- ...lent an ear to or encouraged the spreading of scandal about my neighbor?
- ...taken false oaths or signed false documents?
- ...have my lies caused others any material or spiritual harm?

...flattered others?  
...lied or perjured myself under oath?  
...knowingly and willfully deceived another?  
...gossiped?  
...committed slander or calumny (telling lies about another in order to destroy his reputation)?  
...committed libel (writing lies about another person in order to destroy his reputation)?  
...failed to make reparation for a lie I told or for harm done to a person's reputation?  
...failed to speak out in defense of the Catholic Faith, the Church, or of another person known to be innocent?  
...betrayed another's confidence through speech?  
..., without necessity, critical, negative, or uncharitable in my talk?

## **The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy**

Have I neglected to perform works of mercy when circumstances obliged me?

### **The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy**

1. To admonish sinners.
2. To instruct the ignorant.
3. To counsel the doubtful.
4. To comfort the sorrowful.
5. To bear wrongs patiently.
6. To forgive all injuries.
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

### **The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy**

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To visit and ransom the captives.
5. To harbor the harborless.
6. To visit the sick.
7. To bury the dead?



Remember our Holy Catholic Faith teaches us that... *as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*  
(James, 2:26)

### **The Seven Deadly Sins and the Opposite Virtues**

1. Pride.....Humility
2. Covetousness.....Liberality
3. Lust.....Chastity
4. Anger.....Meekness
5. Gluttony.....Temperance
6. Envy.....Brotherly love
7. Sloth.....Diligence

### **Five Effects of Pride**

1. Vainglory
  - a. *Boasting*
  - b. *Dissimulation / Duplicity*
2. Ambition
3. Contempt for others
4. Anger / Revenge / Resentment
5. Stubbornness / Obstinacy.

### **Nine Ways of Being an Accessory to Another's Sin**

**a.** Have I knowingly caused others to sin?

**b.** Have I co-operated in the sins of others:

1. By counsel.
2. By command.
3. By consent.
4. By provocation.
5. By praise or flattery.
6. By concealment.
7. By partaking.
8. By silence.
9. By defense of the ill do

### **The Four Sins, which Cry to Heaven for Vengeance**

1. Willful Murder.
2. The Sin of Sodomy or Lesbianism.
3. Oppression of the Poor.
4. Defrauding the Laborer of His Just Wages.

## **The Precepts of the Church**

The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor:

**The first precept** *"You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor"* requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord as well as the principal liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints; in the first place, by participating in the Eucharistic celebration, in which the Christian community is gathered, and by resting from those works and activities which could impede such a sanctification of these days.

*Holy days of obligation for the diocese of the United States*  
Mary, Mother of God -Jan 1, Ascension of the Lord - Always 40 days after Easter, Assumption of Mary-Aug. 15, All Saints Day – Nov. 1, Feast of the Immaculate Conception – Dec. 8  
Christmas - Dec 25.

**The second precept** *"You shall confess your sins at least once a year"* ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness.

**The third precept** *"You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season"* guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy.

**The fourth precept** *"You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church"* ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts and help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.

**The fifth precept** *"You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church"* means that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability. The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his own abilities.

### **The Five Blasphemies Against the Immaculate Heart of Mary**

1. Have I blasphemed against the Immaculate Conception?
2. Have I blasphemed against Our Lady's Perpetual Virginity?
3. Have I blasphemed against Our Lady's Divine Maternity?  
Have I failed to recognize Our Lady as the Mother of all men?
4. Have I publicly sought to sow in the hearts of children indifference or scorn, or even hatred, of this Immaculate Mother?
5. Have I outraged Her directly in Her Holy images?

### **Finally:**

Have I received Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin?  
(This is a very grave sacrilege.)

### **St. Anthony Mary Claret's Examination of Venial Sins**

The soul should avoid all venial sins, especially those that pave the way for grave sin. It is not enough, my soul, to have a firm resolve to suffer death rather than consent to any grave sin. It is necessary to have a like resolution to venial sin. He, who does not find in himself this will, cannot have security. There is nothing which can give us such a certain security of eternal salvation as an uninterrupted cautiousness to avoid even the lightest venial sin, and a notable, all-extensive earnestness reaching to all practices of the spiritual life — earnestness in prayer, and in dealing with God; earnestness in mortification and self-denial; earnestness in being humble and in accepting

contempt; earnestness in obeying and renouncing one's own self-will; earnest love of God and neighbor. He, who wants to gain this earnestness and keep it, must necessarily have the resolve to always avoid especially the following venial sins:

- The sin of giving entrance into your heart to any unreasonable suspicion or unfair judgment against your neighbor.
- The sin of introducing talk about another's defects or offending charity in any other way, even lightly.
- The sin of omitting out of laziness our spiritual practices or of performing them with voluntary neglect.
- The sin of having a disordered affection for somebody.
- The sin of having a vain esteem for oneself, or of taking vain satisfaction in things pertaining to us.
- The sin of receiving the Holy Sacraments in a careless way, with distractions and other irreverences, and without a serious preparation.
- Impatience, resentment, and any failure to accept disappointments as coming from God's Hand; for this puts obstacles in the way of the decrees and dispositions of Divine Providence concerning us.
- The sin of giving ourselves an occasion that can even remotely blemish a spotless condition of holy purity.
- The fault of advertently hiding from those who ought to learn them, one's bad inclinations, weaknesses, and mortifications, seeking to pursue the road of virtue not under the direction of obedience, but under the guidance of one's own whims. (**Note:** *This speaks of times when we might have worthy direction if we seek it, but we prefer to follow our own dim lights.*)

### ***Prayer for a Good Confession***

O my God, by my grievous sins I have crucified again Thy Divine Son and made Him a mockery. For this I have deserved Thy wrath and made myself fit for the fires of hell. How ungrateful have I been to Thee as well, my heavenly Father, Who created me out of nothing, redeemed me by the precious Blood of Thy Son and sanctified me by Thy holy sacraments and by the Holy Ghost.

But Thou hast spared me by Thy mercy, to make this confession. Receive me back as Thy prodigal son and grant me to confess well, that I may begin anew to love Thee with my whole heart and soul, and henceforth to keep Thy commandments and suffer patiently whatever temporal punishment may remain. I hope by Thy goodness and power to obtain everlasting life in Paradise through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

### ***A Final Note***

Remember to confess your sins with supernatural sorrow as well as a firm resolution not to sin again, and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Ask your confessor to help you with any difficulties you have in making a good confession. Say your penance promptly.

### ***An Act of Contrition***

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee. And I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen



EXERPS  
FROM  
THE  
CATECHISM  
OF  
THE  
CATHOLIC  
CHURCH  
CONCERNING  
CHASTIY

## **THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT**

### **You shall not commit Adultery<sup>113</sup>**

*You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery". "But I say to you that every one who looks at a women lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart <sup>114</sup>*

#### ***I. "Male and Female He Created Them . . ."***

**2331** "God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image . . . God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion."<sup>115</sup>

"God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them"; <sup>116</sup> He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply"; <sup>117</sup> "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created."<sup>118</sup>

**2332** Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.

**2333** Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.

**2334** "In creating men male and female, God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity."<sup>119</sup> "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God."<sup>120</sup>

**2335** Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The union of man and woman in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."<sup>121</sup> All human generations proceed from this union.<sup>122</sup>

**2336** Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins. In the Sermon on the Mount, he interprets God's plan strictly: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."<sup>123</sup> What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.<sup>124</sup> The tradition of the Church has understood the sixth commandment as encompassing the whole of human sexuality.

114 FC 11. 115Gen 1:27. 116Gen 1:28. 117Gen 5:1-2. 118 FC 22; Cf. GS 49 # 2. 119 MD 6. 120 Gen 2:24. 121 Cf. Gen 4:1-2, 25-26; 5:1. 122 Mt 5:27-28. 123 Cf. Mt 19:6.

## ***II. The Vocation to Chastity***

**2337** 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.

### ***The integrity of the person***

**2338** The chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity



of the person; it is opposed to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech.<sup>125</sup>

**2339** 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.<sup>126</sup> "Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by blind impulses in himself or by mere external constraint. Man gains such dignity when, ridding himself of all slavery to the passions, he presses forward to his goal by freely choosing what is good and, by his diligence and skill, effectively secures for himself the means suited to this end."<sup>127</sup>

**2340** Whoever wants to remain faithful to his baptismal promises and resist temptations will want to adopt the means for doing so: 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. "Indeed it is through chastity that we are gathered together and led back to the unity from which we were fragmented into multiplicity."<sup>128</sup>

**2341** The virtue of chastity comes under the cardinal virtue of temperance, which seeks to permeate the passions and appetites of the senses with reason.

**2342** Self-mastery is a long and exacting work. One can never consider it acquired once and for all. It presupposes renewed effort at all stages of life.<sup>129</sup> The effort required can be more intense in certain periods, such as when the personality is being formed during childhood and adolescence.

**2343** Chastity has laws of growth which progress through stages marked by imperfection and too often by sin. "Man . . . day by day builds himself up through his many free decisions;

and so he knows, loves, and accomplishes moral good by stages of growth."<sup>130</sup>

**2344** Chastity represents an eminently personal task; it also involves a cultural effort, for there is "an interdependence between personal betterment and the improvement of society."<sup>131</sup> Chastity presupposes respect for the rights of the person, in particular the right to receive information and an education that respect the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.

**2345** Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort.<sup>132</sup> The Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ.<sup>133</sup>

### ***The integrality of the gift of self***

**2346** 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.

**2347** The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends, <sup>134</sup> who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality. Chastity is expressed notably in friendship with one's neighbor. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion.

### ***The various forms of chastity***

**2348** All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has "put on Christ,"<sup>135</sup> 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.

**2349** "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."<sup>136</sup> Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practice chastity in continence: There are three forms of the virtue of chastity: the first is that of spouses, the second that of widows, and the third that of virgins. We do not praise any one of them to the exclusion of the others.... This is what makes for the richness of the discipline of the Church.<sup>137</sup>

**2350** Those who are engaged to marry are called to live chastity in continence. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the 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.

### ***Offenses against chastity***

**2351** Lust is disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitize purposes.

**2352** By masturbation is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. "Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action."<sup>138</sup> "The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose." For here 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."<sup>139</sup>

To form an equitable judgment about the subjects' moral responsibility and to guide pastoral action, one must take into account the affective immaturity, force of acquired habit, conditions of anxiety, or other psychological or social factors that lessen if not even reduce to a minimum, moral culpability.

**2353** Fornication is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young.

**2354** Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. 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. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials.

**2355** Prostitution does injury to the dignity of the person who engages in it, reducing the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure. The one who pays sins gravely against himself: he violates the chastity to which his Baptism pledged him and defiles his body; the temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>140</sup> Prostitution is a social scourge. It usually involves women, but also men, children, and adolescents (The latter two cases involve the added sin of scandal.). While it is always gravely sinful to engage in prostitution, the imputability of the offense can be attenuated by destitution, blackmail, or social pressure.

**2356** Rape is the forcible violation of the sexual intimacy of another person. It does injury to justice and charity. Rape deeply wounds the respect, freedom, and physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right. It causes grave damage that can mark the victim for life. It is always an intrinsically evil act. Graver still is the rape of children committed by parents (incest) or those responsible for the education of the children entrusted to them.

### ***Chastity and homosexuality***

**2357** Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity,<sup>141</sup> tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered."<sup>142</sup> 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. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

**2358** The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

**2359** Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer

and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

124 Cf. Mt 5:37. 125 Cf. Sir 1:22. 126 GS 17. 127 St. Augustine, Conf. 10, 29, 40: PL 32, 796.

128 Cf. Titus 2:1-6. 129 FC 34. 130 GS 25 # 1. 131 Cf. Gal 5:22. 132 Cf. 1 Jn 3:3. 133 Cf. Jn 15: 15. 134 Gal 3:27. 135 CDF, Persona humana 11. 136 St. Ambrose, De viduis 4, 23: PL 16, 255A. 137 CDF, Persona humana 9. 138 CDF, Persona humana 9. 139 Cf. 1 Cor 6:15-20.

140 Cf. Gen 19:1-29; Rom 12:4-27; 1 Cor 6:10; 1 Tim 1:10. 141 CDF, Persona humana 8.

### ***III. The Love of Husband and Wife***

**2360** Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.

**2361** "Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is not something simply biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another until death."<sup>143</sup> Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, "Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety." So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, "Blessed are you, O God of our fathers.... You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the race of mankind has sprung. You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.' I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together." and they both said, "Amen, Amen." Then they went to sleep for the night.<sup>144</sup>

**2362** "The acts in marriage by which the intimate and chaste union of the spouses takes place are noble and honorable; the truly human performance of these acts fosters the self-giving they signify and enriches the spouses in joy and gratitude."<sup>145</sup>

Sexuality is a source of joy and pleasure:

The Creator himself . . . established that in the [generative] function, spouses should experience pleasure and enjoyment of body and spirit. Therefore, the spouses do nothing evil in seeking this pleasure and enjoyment. They accept what the Creator has intended for them. At the same time, spouses should know how to keep themselves within the limits of just moderation.<sup>146</sup>

**2363** The 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.

***The conjugal love of man and woman thus stands under the twofold obligation of fidelity and fecundity.***

### ***Conjugal fidelity***

**2364** The married couple forms "the intimate partnership of life and love established by the Creator and governed by his laws; it is rooted in the conjugal covenant, that is, in their irrevocable personal consent."<sup>147</sup> 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.<sup>148</sup> "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."<sup>149</sup>

**2365** 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. St. John Chrysostom suggests that young husbands should say to their wives: I have taken you in my arms, and I love you, and I prefer you to my life itself. For the present life is nothing, and my most ardent dream is to spend it with you in such a way that we may be assured of not being separated in the life reserved for us.... I place your love above all things, and nothing would be more bitter or painful to me than to be of a different mind than you.<sup>150</sup>

### ***The fecundity of marriage***

**2366** Fecundity is a gift; an end of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. So the Church, which "is on the side of life"<sup>151</sup> teaches that "it is necessary that each and every marriage act must remain open 'per se' to the procreation of human life."<sup>152</sup> "This particular doctrine, expounded on numerous occasions by the Magisterium, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act."<sup>153</sup>

**2367** Called to give life, spouses share in the creative power and fatherhood of God.<sup>154</sup> "Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life and to educate their children; they should realize that they are thereby cooperating with the love of God the Creator and are, in a certain sense, its interpreters. They will fulfill this duty with a sense of human and Christian responsibility."<sup>155</sup>

**2368** A particular aspect of this responsibility concerns the 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. Moreover, they should conform their behavior to



the objective criteria of morality: When it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, the morality of the behavior does not depend on criteria, 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; this is possible only if the virtue of married chastity is practiced with sincerity of heart.<sup>156</sup>

**2369** "By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its orientation toward man's exalted vocation to parenthood."<sup>157</sup>

**2370** Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality.<sup>158</sup> These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them, and favor the education of an authentic freedom. In contrast, "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: <sup>159</sup> Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through 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.... the difference, both anthropological and moral, between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle . . . Involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality.<sup>160</sup>

**2371** "Let all be convinced that human life and the duty of transmitting it are not limited by the horizons of this life only:

their true evaluation and full significance can be understood only in reference to man's eternal destiny."<sup>161</sup>

**2372** The state has a responsibility for its citizens' well being. In this capacity it is legitimate for it 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. The state may not legitimately usurp the initiative of spouses, who have the primary responsibility for the procreation and education of their children.<sup>162</sup> in this area; it is not authorized to employ means contrary to the moral law.

### ***The gift of a child***

**2373** Sacred Scripture and the Church's traditional practice see in large families a sign of God's blessing and the parents' generosity.<sup>163</sup>

**2374** Couples who discover that they are sterile suffer greatly. "What will you give me," asks Abraham of God, "for I continue childless?"<sup>164</sup> and Rachel cries to her husband Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!"<sup>164</sup>

**2375** Research aimed at reducing human sterility is to be encouraged, on condition that it is placed "at the service of the human person, of his inalienable rights, and his true and integral good according to the design and will of God."<sup>166</sup>

**2376** Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' "right to become a father and a mother only through each other."<sup>167</sup>

**2377** Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) are perhaps less reprehensible, yet remain morally unacceptable.

They dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children."<sup>168</sup> "Under the moral aspect procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not willed as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses' union.... Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person."<sup>169</sup>

**2378** A child is not something owed to one, but is a gift. The "supreme gift of marriage" is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged "right to a child" would lead. In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right "to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents," and "the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception."<sup>170</sup>

**2379** The Gospel shows that physical sterility is not an absolute evil. Spouses who still suffer from infertility after exhausting legitimate medical procedures should unite themselves with the Lord's Cross-, the source of all spiritual fecundity. They can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services for others.

142 FC 11. 143 Tob 8:4-9. 144 GS 49 # 2. 145 Pius XII, Discourse, October 29, 1951. 146 GS 48 # 1. 147 Cf. CIC can. 1056. 148 Mk 109; cf. Mt 19:1-12; 1 Cor 7: 10-11. 149 St. John Chrysostom, Hom. In Eph. 20, 8: PG 62, 146-147. 150 FC 30. 151 HV 11. 152 HV 12; cf. Pius XI, encyclical, Casti connubii. 153 Cf. Eph 3:14; Mt 23:9. 154 GS 50 # 2. 155 GS 51 # 3. 156 Cf. HV 12. 157 HV 16. 158 HV 14. 159 FC 32. 160 GS 51 # 4. 161 Cf. HV 23; PP 37. 162 Cf. GS 50 # 2. 163 Gen 15:2. 164 Gen 30:1. 165 CDF, Donum vitae

intro. 2. 166 CDF, Donum vitae II, 1. 167 CDF, Donum vitae II, 5. 168 CDF, Donum vitae II, 4. 169 CDF, Donum vitae II, 8.

#### ***IV. Offenses Against the Dignity of Marriage Adultery***

**2380** Adultery refers to marital infidelity. When two partners, of whom at least one is married to another party, have sexual relations - even transient ones - they commit adultery. Christ condemns even adultery of mere desire.<sup>171</sup> The sixth commandment and the New Testament forbid adultery absolutely.<sup>172</sup> The prophets denounce the gravity of adultery; they see it as an image of the sin of idolatry.<sup>173</sup>

**2381** Adultery is an injustice. He who commits adultery fails in his commitment. He does injury to the sign of the covenant which the Marriage bond is, transgresses the rights of the other spouse, and undermines the institution of marriage by breaking the contract on which it is based. He compromises the good of human generation and the welfare of children who need their parents' stable union.

#### ***Divorce***

**2382** The Lord Jesus insisted on the original intention of the Creator who willed that marriage be indissoluble.<sup>174</sup> He abrogates the accommodations that had slipped into the old Law.<sup>175</sup> Between the baptized, "a ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or for any reason other than death."<sup>176</sup>

**2383** The separation of spouses while maintaining the marriage bond can be legitimate in certain cases provided for by canon law.<sup>177</sup> If civil divorce remains the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children, or the protection of inheritance, it can be tolerated and does not constitute a moral offense.

**2384** Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law. It claims to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death. Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental

marriage is the sign. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery: If a husband, separated from his wife, approaches another woman, he is an adulterer because he makes that woman commit adultery, and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has drawn another's husband to herself.<sup>178</sup>

**2385** Divorce is immoral also because it introduces disorder into the family and into society.

This disorder brings grave harm to the deserted spouse, to children traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them, and because of its contagious effect which makes it truly a plague on society.

**2386** It can happen that one of the spouses is the innocent victim of a divorce decreed by civil law; this spouse therefore has not contravened the moral law. There is a considerable difference between a spouse who has sincerely tried to be faithful to the sacrament of marriage and is unjustly abandoned, and one who through his own grave fault destroys a canonically valid marriage.<sup>179</sup>

### ***Other offenses against the dignity of marriage***

**2387** The predicament of a man who, desiring to convert to the Gospel, is obliged to repudiate one or more wives with whom he has shared years of conjugal life, is understandable. However polygamy is not in accord with the moral law." [Conjugal] communion is radically contradicted by polygamy; this, in fact, directly negates the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning, because it is contrary to the equal personal dignity of men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive."<sup>180</sup> The Christian who has previously lived in polygamy has a grave duty in justice to honor the obligations contracted in regard to his former wives and his children.

**2388** Incest designates intimate relations between relatives or in-laws within a degree that prohibits marriage between them.<sup>181</sup> St. Paul stigmatizes this especially grave offense: "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you . . . for a man is living with his father's wife.... In the name of the Lord Jesus ... you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh...."<sup>182</sup> Incest corrupts family relationships and marks a regression toward animality.

**2389** Connected to incest is any sexual abuse perpetrated by adults on children or adolescents entrusted to their care. The offense is compounded by the scandalous harm done to the physical and moral integrity of the young, who will remain scarred by it, all their lives; and the violation of responsibility for their upbringing.

**2390** In a so-called free union, a man and a woman refuse to give juridical and public form to a liaison involving sexual intimacy. The expression "free union" is fallacious: what can "union" mean when the partners make no commitment to one another, each exhibiting a lack of trust in the other, in himself, or in the future? The expression covers a number of different situations: concubinage, rejection of marriage as such, or inability to make long-term commitments.<sup>183</sup> All these situations offend against the dignity of marriage; they destroy the very idea of the family; they weaken the sense of fidelity. They are contrary to the moral law. The sexual act must take place exclusively within marriage. Outside of marriage it always constitutes a grave sin and excludes one from sacramental communion.

**2391** Some today claim a "right to a trial marriage" where there is an intention of getting married later. However firm the purpose of those who engage in premature sexual relations may be, "the fact is that such liaisons can scarcely ensure mutual sincerity and fidelity in a relationship between a man and a woman, nor, especially, can they protect it from inconstancy of desires or whim."<sup>184</sup> Carnal union is morally legitimate only when a definitive community of life between a

man and woman has been established. Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another.<sup>185</sup>

170 Cf. Mt 5:27-28. 171 Cf. Mt 5:32; 19:6; Mk 10:11; 1 Cor 6:9-10. 172 Cf. Hos 2:7; Jer 5:7; 13:27. 173 Cf. Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mk 10 9; Lk 16:18; 1 Cor 7:10-11. 174 Cf. Mt 19:7-9. 175 CIC, can. 1141. 176 Cf. CIC, cann. 1151-1155. 177 St. Basil, *Moralia* 73, 1: PG 31, 849-852. 178 Cf. FC 84. 179 FC 19; cf. GS 47 # 2. 180 Cf. Lev 18:7-20.

1811 Cor 5:1, 4-5. 182 Cf. FC 81. 183 CDF, *Persona humana* 7. 184 Cf. FC 80.

### *IN BRIEF*

**2392** "Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being" (FC 11).

**2393** By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.

**2394** Christ is the model of chastity. Every baptized person is called to lead a chaste life, each according to his particular state of life.

**2395** Chastity means the integration of sexuality within the person. It includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery.

**2396** Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices.

**2397** The covenant which spouses have freely entered into entails faithful love. It imposes on them the obligation to keep their marriage indissoluble.

**2398** Fecundity is a good, a gift and an end of marriage. By giving life, spouses participate in God's fatherhood.

**2399** The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, direct sterilization or contraception).

**2400** Adultery, divorce, polygamy, and free union are grave offenses against the dignity of marriage.

## THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

**You Shall not bear false witness against your neighbor<sup>253</sup>**

*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*

*It was said of old, "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn"<sup>254</sup>*

### ***III. Offenses Against Truth***

**2475** Christ's disciples have "put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."<sup>273</sup> By "putting away falsehood," they are to "put away all malice and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander."<sup>274</sup>

**2476** False witness and perjury. When it is made publicly, a statement contrary to the truth takes on a particular gravity. In court it becomes false witness.<sup>275</sup> when it is under oath, it is perjury. Acts such as these contribute to condemnation of the innocent, exoneration of the guilty, or the increased punishment of the accused.<sup>276</sup> they gravely compromise the exercise of justice and the fairness of judicial decisions.

**2477** Respect for the reputation of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury.<sup>277</sup> He becomes guilty: of rash judgment who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor; of detraction who, without objectively valid reason, discloses another's faults and failings to persons who did not know them; <sup>278</sup> of calumny who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.



**2478** To avoid rash judgment, everyone should be careful to interpret insofar as possible his neighbor's thoughts, words, and deeds in a favorable way: Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it. And if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.<sup>279</sup>

**2479** Detraction and calumny destroy the reputation and honor of one's neighbor. Honor is the social witness given to human dignity, and everyone enjoys a natural right to the honor of his name and reputation and to respect. Thus, detraction and calumny offend against the virtues of justice and charity.

**2480** Every word or attitude is forbidden which by flattery, adulation, or complaisance encourages and confirms another in malicious acts and perverse conduct. Adulation is a grave fault if it makes one an accomplice in another's vices or grave sins. Neither the desire to be of service nor friendship justifies duplicitous speech. Adulation is a venial sin when it only seeks to be agreeable, to avoid evil, to meet a need, or to obtain legitimate advantages.

**2481** Boasting or bragging is an offense against truth. So is irony aimed at disparaging someone by maliciously caricaturing some aspect of his or her behavior?

**2482** "A lie consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving."<sup>280</sup> The Lord denounces lying as the work of the devil: "You are of your father the devil, . . . there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."<sup>281</sup>

**2483** Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone

into error. By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord.

**2484** The gravity of a lie is measured against the nature of the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims. If a lie in itself only constitutes a venial sin, it becomes mortal when it does grave injury to the virtues of justice and charity.

**2485** By its very nature, lying is to be condemned. It is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity. The culpability is greater when the intention of deceiving entails the risk of deadly consequences for those who are led astray.

**2486** Since it violates the virtue of truthfulness, a lie does real violence to another. It affects his ability to know, which is a condition of every judgment and decision. It contains the seed of discord and all consequent evils. Lying is destructive of society; it undermines trust among men and tears apart the fabric of social relationships.

**2487** Every offense committed against justice and truth entails the duty of reparation, even if its author has been forgiven. When it is impossible publicly to make reparation for a wrong, it must be made secretly. If someone who has suffered harm cannot be directly compensated, he must be given moral satisfaction in the name of charity. This duty of reparation also concerns offenses against another's reputation. This reparation, moral and sometimes material, must be evaluated in terms of the extent of the damage inflicted. It obliges in conscience.

273 Eph 4:24. 274 Eph 4:25; 1 Pet 2:1. 275 Cf. Prov 19:9. 276 Cf. Prov 18:5. 277 Cf. CIC can. 220. 278 Cf. Sir 21:28. 279 St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 22. 280 St. Augustine, *De mendacio* 4, 5: PL 40: 491. 281 Jn 8:44.

#### ***IV. Respect for the Truth***

**2488** The right to the communication of the truth is not unconditional. Everyone must conform his life to the Gospel precept of fraternal love. This requires us in concrete situations to judge whether or not it is appropriate to reveal the truth to someone who asks for it.

**2489** Charity and respect for the truth should dictate the response to every request for information or communication. The good and safety of others, respect for privacy, and the common good are sufficient reasons for being silent about what ought not be known or for making use of a discreet language. The duty to avoid scandal often commands strict discretion. No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it.<sup>282</sup>

**2490** The secret of the sacrament of reconciliation is sacred, and cannot be violated under any pretext. "The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore, it is a crime for a confessor in any way to betray a penitent by word or in any other manner or for any reason."<sup>283</sup>

**2491** Professional secrets - for example, those of political office holders, soldiers, physicians, and lawyers - or confidential information given under the seal of secrecy must be kept, save in exceptional cases where keeping the secret is bound to cause very grave harm to the one who confided it, to the one who received it or to a third party, and where the very grave harm can be avoided only by divulging the truth. Even if not confided under the seal of secrecy, private information prejudicial to another is not to be divulged without a grave and proportionate reason.

**2492** Everyone should observe an appropriate reserve concerning persons' private lives. Those in charge of communications should maintain a fair balance between the requirements of the common good and respect for individual rights. Interference by the media in the private lives of persons engaged in political or public activity is to be

condemned to the extent that it infringes upon their privacy and freedom.

282 Cf. Sir 27:16; Prov 25:9-10. 283 CIC, Can. 983 # 1.

### ***V. The Use of the Social Communications Media***

**2493** Within modern society the communications media play a major role in information, cultural promotion, and formation. This role is increasing, as a result of technological progress, the extent and diversity of the news transmitted, and the influence exercised on public opinion.

**2494** The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good.<sup>284</sup> Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity: The proper exercise of this right demands that the content of the communication be true and within the limits set by justice and charity - complete. Further, it should be communicated honestly and properly. This means that in the gathering and in the publication of news, the moral law and the legitimate rights and dignity of man should be upheld.<sup>285</sup>

**2495** "It is necessary that all members of society meet the demands of justice and charity in this domain. They should help, through the means of social communication, in the formation and diffusion of sound public opinion."<sup>286</sup> Solidarity is a consequence of genuine and right communication and the free circulation of ideas that further knowledge and respect for others.

**2496** The means of social communication (especially the mass media) can give rise to a certain passivity among users, making them less than vigilant consumers of what is said or shown. Users should practice moderation and discipline in their approach to the mass media. They will want to form enlightened and correct consciences the more easily to resist unwholesome influences.

**2497** By the very nature of their profession, journalists have an obligation to serve the truth and not offend against charity in disseminating information. They should strive to respect, with equal care, the nature of the facts and the limits of critical judgment concerning individuals. They should not stoop to defamation.

**2498** "Civil authorities have particular responsibilities in this field because of the common good.... It is for the civil authority ... to defend and safeguard a true and just freedom of information."<sup>287</sup> By promulgating laws and overseeing their application, public authorities should ensure that "public morality and social progress are not gravely endangered" through misuse of the media.<sup>288</sup> civil authorities should punish any violation of the rights of individuals to their reputation and privacy. They should give timely and reliable reports concerning the general good or respond to the well-founded concerns of the people. Nothing can justify recourse to disinformation for manipulating public opinion through the media. Interventions by public authority should avoid injuring the freedom of individuals or groups.

**2499** Moral judgment must condemn the plague of totalitarian states which systematically falsify the truth, exercise political control of opinion through the media, manipulate defendants and witnesses at public trials, and imagine that they secure their tyranny by strangling and repressing everything they consider "thought crimes."

284 Cf. IM 11. 285 IM 5 # 2. 286 IM 8. 287 IM 12. 288 IM 12 # 2.

## THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

**You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.** <sup>298</sup>

***Every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.***<sup>299</sup>

**2514** St. John distinguishes three kinds of covetousness or concupiscence: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life.<sup>300</sup> In the Catholic catechetical tradition, the ninth commandment forbids carnal concupiscence; the tenth forbids coveting another's goods.

**2515** Etymologically, "concupiscence" can refer to any intense form of human desire. Christian theology has given it a particular meaning: the movement of the sensitive appetite contrary to the operation of the human reason. The apostle St. Paul identifies it with the rebellion of the "flesh" against the "spirit."<sup>301</sup> Concupiscence stems from the disobedience of the first sin. It unsettles man's moral faculties and, without being in itself an offense, inclines man to commit sins.<sup>302</sup>

**2516** Because man is a composite being, spirit and body, there already exists a certain tension in him; a certain struggle of tendencies between "spirit" and "flesh" develops. But in fact this struggle belongs to the heritage of sin. It is a consequence of sin and at the same time a confirmation of it. It is part of the daily experience of the spiritual battle: For the Apostle it is not a matter of despising and condemning the body which with

the spiritual soul constitutes man's nature and personal subjectivity. Rather, he is concerned with the morally good or bad works, or better, the permanent dispositions - virtues and vices - which are the fruit of submission (in the first case) or of resistance (in the second case) to the saving action of the Holy Spirit. For this reason the Apostle writes: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."<sup>303</sup>

298Ex 20:17. 299 Mt 5:28. 300 Cf. 1 Jn 2:16. 301 Cf. Gal 5:16, 17, 24; Eph 2:3. 302 Cf. Gen 3:11; Council of Trent: DS 1515. 303 John Paul II, DeV 55; cf. Gal 5:25.

### ***I. Purification of the Heart***

**2517** The heart is the seat of moral personality: "Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication...."<sup>304</sup> The struggle against carnal covetousness entails purifying the heart and practicing temperance: Remain simple and innocent, and you will be like little children who do not know the evil that destroys man's life.<sup>305</sup>

**2518** The sixth beatitude proclaims, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."<sup>306</sup> "Pure in heart" refers to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God's holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity; <sup>307</sup> chastity or sexual rectitude; <sup>308</sup> love of truth and orthodoxy of faith.<sup>309</sup> There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith: The faithful must believe the articles of the Creed "so that by believing they may obey God, by obeying may live well, by living well may purify their hearts, and with pure hearts may understand what they believe."<sup>310</sup>

**2519** The "pure in heart" are promised that they will see God face to face and be like him.<sup>311</sup> Purity of heart is the precondition of the vision of God. Even now it enables us to see according to God, to accept others as "neighbors"; it lets us perceive the human body - ours and our neighbor's - as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of divine beauty.

304Mt 15:19. 305 Pastor Hermae, Mandate 2, 1: PG 2, 916. 306Mt 5:8. 307 Cf. 1 Tim 4:3-9; 2 Tim 2:22.

308 Cf. 1 Thess 4:7; Col 3:5; Eph 4:19. 309 Cf. Titus 1:15; 1 Tim 1:3-4; 2 Tim 2:23-26. 310 St. Augustine, *De fide ET symbolo* 10, 25: PL 40, 196. 311 Cf. 1 Cor 13:12; 1 Jn 3:2.

## ***II. The Battle for Purity***

**2520** Baptism confers on its recipient the grace of purification from all sins. But the baptized must continue to struggle against concupiscence of the flesh and disordered desires. With God's grace he will prevail

- By the virtue and gift of chastity, for chastity lets us love with upright and undivided heart;

- By purity of intention which consists in seeking the true end of man: with simplicity of vision, the baptized person seeks to find and to fulfill God's will in everything;<sup>312</sup>

- By purity of vision, external and internal; by discipline of feelings and imagination; by refusing all complicity in impure thoughts that incline us to turn aside from the path of God's commandments: "Appearance arouses yearning in fools";<sup>313</sup>

- By prayer:

I thought that continence arose from one's own powers, which I did not recognize in myself. I was foolish enough not to know . . . that no one can be continent unless you grant it. For you would surely have granted it if my inner groaning had reached your ears and I with firm faith had cast my cares on you.<sup>314</sup>

**2521** Purity requires modesty, an integral part of temperance. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden. It is ordered to chastity to whose sensitivity it bears witness. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity.

**2522** Modesty protects the mystery of persons and their love. It encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships; it requires that the conditions for the definitive giving and commitment of man and woman to one another be fulfilled. Modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet.



**2523** There is a modesty of the feelings as well as of the body. It protests, for example, against the voyeuristic explorations of the human body in certain advertisements, or against the solicitations of certain media that go too far in the exhibition of intimate things. Modesty inspires a way of life which makes it possible to resist the allurements of fashion and the pressures of prevailing ideologies.

**2524** The forms taken by modesty vary from one culture to another. Everywhere, however, modesty exists as an intuition of the spiritual dignity proper to man. It is born with the awakening consciousness of being a subject. Teaching modesty to children and adolescents means awakening in them respect for the human person.

**2525** Christian purity requires a purification of the social climate. It requires of the communications media that their presentations show concern for respect and restraint. Purity of heart brings freedom from widespread eroticism and avoids entertainment inclined to voyeurism and illusion.

**2526** So called moral permissiveness rests on an erroneous conception of human freedom; the necessary precondition for the development of true freedom is to let oneself be educated in the moral law. Those in charge of education can reasonably be expected to give young people instruction respectful of the truth, the qualities of the heart, and the moral and spiritual dignity of man.

**2527** "The Good News of Christ continually renews the life and culture of fallen man; it combats and removes the error and evil which flow from the ever-present attraction of sin. It never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples. It takes the spiritual qualities and endowments of every age and nation, and with supernatural riches it causes them to blossom, as it were, from within; it fortifies, completes, and restores them in Christ."<sup>315</sup>

312 Cf. Rom 12:2; Col 1:10. 313 Wis 15:5. 314 St. Augustine, Conf. 6, 11, 20: PL 32, 729-730. 315 GS 58 # 4.

## **IN BRIEF**

**2528** "Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:28).

**2529** The ninth commandment warns against lust or carnal concupiscence.

**2530** The struggle against carnal lust involves purifying the heart and practicing temperance.

**2531** Purity of heart will enable us to see God: it enables us even now to see things according to God.

**2532** Purification of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and of vision.

**2533** Purity of heart requires the modesty, which is patience, decency, and discretion. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person.

## THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

**You shall not covet ... anything that is your neighbor's....**

**You shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant,, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.<sup>316</sup>**

***For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.<sup>317</sup>***

**2534** The tenth commandment unfolds and completes the ninth, which is concerned with concupiscence of the flesh. It forbids coveting the goods of another, as the root of theft, robbery, and fraud, which the seventh commandment forbids. "Lust of the eyes" leads to the violence and injustice forbidden by the fifth commandment.<sup>318</sup> Avarice, like fornication, originates in the idolatry prohibited by the first three prescriptions of the Law.<sup>319</sup> The tenth commandment concerns the intentions of the heart; with the ninth, it summarizes all the precepts of the Law.

316 EX 20:17; Deut 5:21. 317Mt 6:21. 318 Cf. 1 Jn 2:16; Mic 2:2. 319 Cf. Wis 14:12.

### ***I. The Disorder of Covetous Desires***

**2535** The sensitive appetite leads us to desire pleasant things we do not have, e.g., the desire to eat when we are hungry or to warm ourselves when we are cold. These desires are good in themselves; but often they exceed the limits of reason and drive us to covet unjustly what is not ours and belongs to another or is owed to him.

**2536** The tenth commandment forbids greed and the desire to amass earthly goods without limit. It forbids avarice arising from a passion for riches and their attendant power. It also

forbids the desire to commit injustice by harming our neighbor in his temporal goods:

When the Law says, "You shall not covet," these words mean that we should banish our desires for whatever does not belong to us. Our thirst for another's goods is immense, infinite, never quenched. Thus it is written: "He who loves money never has money enough."<sup>320</sup>

**2537** It is not a violation of this commandment to desire to obtain things that belong to one's neighbor, provided this is done by just means. Traditional catechesis realistically mentions "those who have a harder struggle against their criminal desires" and so who "must be urged the more to keep this commandment": . . . merchants who desire scarcity and rising prices, who cannot bear not to be the only ones buying and selling so that they themselves can sell more dearly and buy more cheaply; those who hope that their peers will be impoverished, in order to realize a profit either by selling to them or buying from them . . . physicians who wish disease to spread; lawyers who are eager for many important cases and trials.<sup>321</sup>

**2538** The tenth commandment requires that envy be banished from the human heart. When the prophet Nathan wanted to spur King David to repentance, he told him the story about the poor man who had only one ewe lamb that he treated like his own daughter and the rich man who, despite the great number of his flocks, envied the poor man and ended by stealing his lamb.<sup>322</sup> Envy can lead to the worst crimes.<sup>323</sup> "Through the devil's envy death entered the world":<sup>324</sup>

We fight one another, and envy arms us against one another... If everyone strives to unsettle the Body of Christ, where shall we end up? We are engaged in making Christ's Body a corpse...We declare ourselves members of one and the same organism, yet we devour one another like beasts.<sup>325</sup>

**2539** Envy is a capital sin. It refers to the sadness at the sight of another's goods and the immoderate desire to acquire them

for oneself, even unjustly. When it wishes grave harm to a neighbor it is a mortal sin: St. Augustine saw envy as "the diabolical sin."<sup>326</sup> "From envy are born hatred, detraction, calumny, joy caused by the misfortune of a neighbor, and displeasure caused by his prosperity."<sup>327</sup>

**2540** Envy represents a form of sadness and therefore a refusal of charity; the baptized person should struggle against it by exercising good will. Envy often comes from pride; the baptized person should train himself to live in humility:

Would you like to see God glorified by you? Then rejoice in your brother's progress and you will immediately give glory to God. Because his servant could conquer envy by rejoicing in the merits of others, God will be praised.<sup>328</sup>

320 Roman Catechism, III, 37; cf. Sir 5:8. 321 Roman Catechism, III, 37. 322 Cf. 2 Sam 12:14. 323 Cf. Gen 4:3-7; 1 Kings 21:1-29. 324 Wis 2:24. 325 St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in 2 Cor. 27, 3-4 PG 61, 588. 326 Cf. St. Augustine, De catechizandis rudibus 4, 8 PL 40, 315-316. 327 St. Gregory the Great Moralia in Job 31, 45: PL 76, 621. 328 St. John Chrysostom, Hom. in Rom. 71, 5: PG 60, 448.

## ***II. The Desires of the Spirit***

**2541** The economy of law and grace turns men's hearts away from avarice and envy. It initiates them into desire for the Sovereign Good; it instructs them in the desires of the Holy Spirit who satisfies man's heart. The God of the promises always warned man against seduction by what from the beginning has seemed "good for food . . . a delight to the eyes . . . to be desired to make one wise."<sup>329</sup>

**2542** The Law entrusted to Israel never sufficed to justify those subject to it; it even became the instrument of "lust."<sup>330</sup> The gap between wanting and doing points to the conflict between God's Law which is the "law of my mind," and another law "making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."<sup>331</sup>

**2543** "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear

witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."<sup>332</sup> Henceforth, Christ's faithful "have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"; they are led by the Spirit and follow the desires of the Spirit.<sup>333</sup>

329 Gen 3:6. 330 Cf. Rom 7:7. 331 Rom 7:23; cf. 7:10. 332 Rom 3:21-22. 333 Gal 5:24; cf. Rom 8:14, 27.

### ***III. Poverty of Heart***

**2544** Jesus enjoins his disciples to prefer him to everything and everyone, and bids them "renounce all that [they have]" for his sake and that of the Gospel.<sup>334</sup> Shortly before his passion he gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on.<sup>335</sup> The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

**2545** All Christ's faithful are to "direct their affections rightly, lest they be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty."<sup>336</sup>

**2546** "Blessed are the poor in spirit."<sup>337</sup> The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness and grace, of beauty and peace. Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom already belongs:<sup>338</sup>

The Word speaks of voluntary humility as "poverty in spirit"; the Apostle gives an example of God's poverty when he says: "For your sakes he became poor."<sup>339</sup>

**2547** The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods.<sup>340</sup> "Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."<sup>341</sup> Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow.<sup>342</sup> Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God.

334 Lk 14:33; cf. Mk 8:35. 335 Cf. Lk 21:4. 336 LG 42 # 3. 337 Mt 5:3. 338 Cf. Lk 6:20. 339 St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De beatitudinibus* 1: PG 44, 1200D; cf.

2 Cor 8:9. 340 Lk 6:24. 341 St. Augustine, De serm. Dom. in monte 1, 1, 3: PL 34, 1232. 342 Cf. Mt 6:25-34.

#### **IV. "I Want to See God"**

**2548** Desire for true happiness frees man from his immoderate attachment to the goods of this world so that he can find his fulfillment in the vision and beatitude of God. "The promise [of seeing God] surpasses all beatitude.... In Scripture, to see is to possess.... Whoever sees God has obtained all the goods of which he can conceive."<sup>343</sup>

**2549** It remains for the holy people to struggle, with grace from on high, to obtain the good things God promises. In order to possess and contemplate God, Christ's faithful mortify their cravings and, with the grace of God, prevail over the seductions of pleasure and power.

**2550** On this way of perfection, the Spirit and the Bride call whoever hears them <sup>344</sup> to perfect communion with God:

*There will true glory be, where no one will be praised by mistake or flattery; true honor will not be refused to the worthy, nor granted to the unworthy; likewise, no one unworthy will pretend to be worthy, where only those who are worthy will be admitted. There true peace will reign, where no one will experience opposition either from self or others. God himself will be virtue's reward; he gives virtue and has promised to give himself as the best and greatest reward that could exist.... "I shall be their God and they will be my people...." This is also the meaning of the Apostle's words: "So that God may be all in all." God himself will be the goal of our desires; we shall contemplate him without end, love him without surfeit, praise him without weariness. This gift, this state, this act, like eternal life itself, will assuredly be common to all.*<sup>345</sup>

343 St. Gregory of Nyssa, De beatitudinibus 6: PG 44, 1265A. 344 Cf. Rev 22:17. 345 St. Augustine, De civ. Dei, 22, 30: PL 41, 801-802; cf. Lev 26:12; cf. 1 Cor 15:28.

## **IN BRIEF**

**2551** "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21).

**2552** The tenth commandment forbids avarice arising from a passion for riches and their attendant power.

**2553** Envy is sadness at the sight of another's goods and the immoderate desire to have them for oneself. It is a capital sin.

**2554** The baptized person combats envy through good-will, humility, and abandonment to the providence of God.

**2555** Christ's faithful "have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" Gal 5:24); they are led by the Spirit and follow his desires.

**2556** Detachment from riches is necessary for entering the Kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

**2557** "I want to see God" expresses the true desire of man. Thirst for God is quenched by the water of eternal life (cf In 4:14).











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