



TEN COMMANDMENTS

Sixth Commandment: You shall Not Commit Adultery



REFLECTIONS

God created man in His own image... male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).

“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” (CCC 2331; *Familiaris consortio*, Pope John Paul II, 1981). Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way (CCC 2335).

Sexual Identity

The perception of sexual identity is often confused by outward signs of what it means to be male or female. Not so long ago, the color of baby clothes or gift wrap (pink or blue) was helpful; then, more recently, women were encouraged to act like men (assertive, unemotional, family second or none at all), dress like men (black or navy suits, preferably with pants), and to have a career outside the home like men. Today, it seems to be acceptable to choose for ourselves which sex we

“identify” with—perhaps we’ll choose to be one sex this week and the other the next.

The presumed qualities of each sex are still being used to define what



“Lust,” from *The Seven Deadly Sins and Four Last Things*, Hieronymus Bosch, ca. 1500.

is a man and what is a woman. The complementary identities of men and women are forgotten or ignored, detracting from the dignity and uniqueness of each. Men and women are formed in the image of God and created to be complementary to each other, melding their individual and unique qualities together, becoming a new “one,” and in so

doing transforming their marriage, the family, the workplace, and society. Through a married couple’s bond of love and fidelity, forming a family, they find what it means to be truly human.

“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 integrity of the gift” (CCC 2337).

Living Chaste Lives

Adultery or acting on or thinking lustful thoughts is an affront to the dignity of each of the persons involved, leading to a triangle of temptation and sinfulness. The virtue of chastity can be found under the cardinal virtue of temperance, and can only be lived by practicing self-mastery and thereby experiencing true freedom. One either governs his passions, his actions, and experiences freedom and happiness, or he is governed by them and experiences unhappiness. One

finds dignity in freely choosing what is good. And since we are faced with choices throughout the hours of each day, we find that only by the grace of God can we practice living a chaste life. Chastity represents an eminently personal task. (CCC 2525). The struggle for self-mastery is one which lasts our entire lives, more difficult at various times than others. “All Christ’s faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life,” single, married, or widowed (CCC 2348).

Living in conjugal chastity, the married couple are visible expressions of Christ’s fidelity to the Church. As Christ is faithful, so are the spouses faithful to each other. Their bond of love becomes the image and the symbol of the covenant which unites God and His people. And the same sin which can harm the conjugal covenant

becomes an image of the infidelity of the people to their God (*Familiaris consortio*, Pope John Paul II, 1981).

For Reflection

- Is it possible to be chaste and live



‘in the world’ today when we are flooded with advertisements, TV shows, and movies that portray sexuality as one-dimensional or a product which can be purchased?

Try turning off the sound on the TV and critically watching the commercials. What do you see that you might not have seen before?

- What are some areas of your life where you need to practice self-mastery?
- Fidelity requires constancy in keeping one’s word. Do you keep your promises to your spouse, your siblings, your friends, even in small matters?

Further Reading

- *Familiaris consortio*, Pope John Paul II, 1981.
- *Letter to Women*, Pope John Paul II, 1995.
- *Essays on Woman, Second Edition* (Trans. by Freda Mary Oben), Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), 1996.
- *The Chaste Project*, Christalina and Jason Evert, www.chaste.com
- *Called to Love*, Jose Granados and Carl Anderson, 1995.

ACTIVITIES

For Families and Children

For Families:

1. Read aloud 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. What do you hear? What is God saying to you today? God loves you. Sometimes he may speak to us in a way that corrects our actions because we are headed in a direction that leads away from him. If your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, how will you live your life? What will you continue to do? Will you change any of your actions?

2. Read aloud Genesis 1:26–31. What strikes you in this reading? Tell what this means to you in your life today? Through our baptism, we have become children of God. As a son or daughter of God the Father, we each have a personal Christian dignity. With this belief, we show respect for ourselves and for others. Discuss ways that we show respect for ourselves. Consider the way we speak, our personal hygiene, the way we dress, the choices we make in our free time, at work or in our studies, our choices

of entertainment, and our general behavior toward others.

3. As a preparation, read *Gaudium et Spes* number 48 from the Second Vatican Council. Then read aloud Genesis 2:18–24. Discuss what you hear. The bond of marriage is sacred and holy. We celebrate the Eucharist at the sacred altar of the Lord’s table. We have previously considered the family dining table as an “altar,” a place for family prayer and meals together. Consider also the nuptial bed as an

“altar,” sacred and holy. Is it possible to make this room “off-limits” to the rest of the family? Over time, read or share the story of Tobias and Sarah from the Book of Tobit, including the beautiful prayer of Tobias (Tobit 8:4–9).

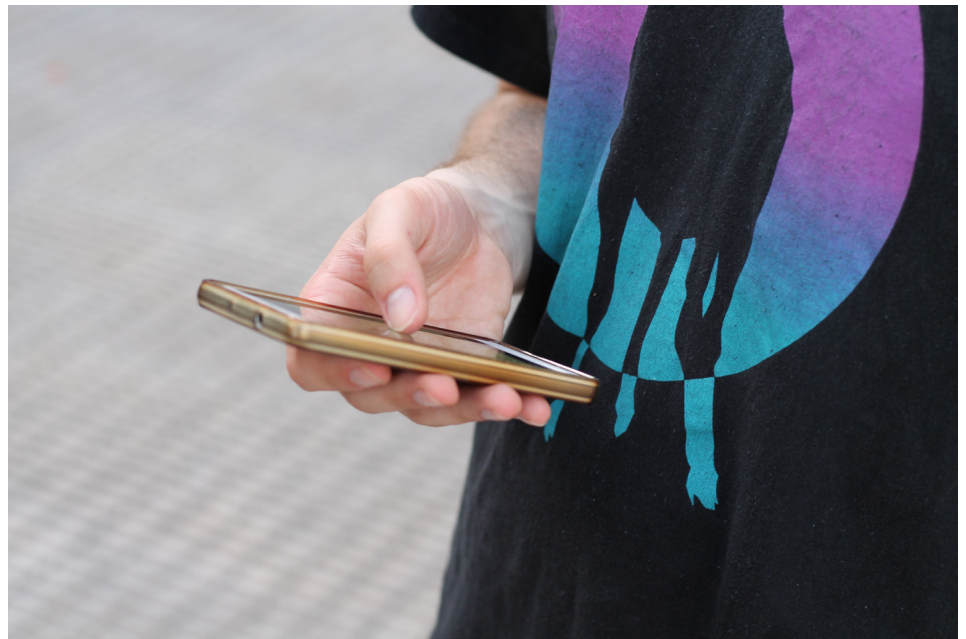
For Children:

1. Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” God loves each one of us. We have been created in the image and likeness of God. Through our baptism, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and we become children of God. God wants us to be happy and desires for us to be holy. From these facts, we have inherited a personal Christian dignity through which we should show respect for ourselves and others in our thoughts, words and actions.

2. One of the ways that we can show this dignity and self-respect is to dress modestly. This means that we try to cover our body with our clothing, not revealing too much of our skin. Draw and color a picture of yourself wearing clothing that is modest.

3. The world around us often presents to us many things for entertainment or enjoyment that are not helpful in maintaining our dignity as children of God. Make a chart with four columns. Label the top of each column: TV, Music, Video Games, Books (you may include additional categories as well). With the help of your parents, list in each column specific examples of those things that are appropriate for a Christian boy or girl.

4. Keep a calendar or journal, recording by writing and/or drawing each day one way in which you



demonstrated personal dignity and self-respect by your words and/or actions. These actions may include: the way you speak and your choice of words, personal cleanliness, the choices you make in your free time or studies, the way you dress, your food choices and manners, and your general behavior toward others. Share this work with your parents.

For Youth:

1. We are tempted everyday by Satan and his demons to participate in sins against chastity. Whether it is in how we look at others, talk about others, or content we come across on TV, the Internet, apps, etc. we need all the help we can get to combat these temptations. Print out the St. Michael prayer and tape it to the side of your computer monitor, or put an image of St. Michael on your phone's wallpaper to help remind you of our constant battle with evil and temptation.

2. Identify any movies, music, shows, apps that fill your head with lustful

images or thought processes. Get rid of them. Take those playlists off your phone, lose the DVDs, delete the files, and avoid those channels/websites/apps.

3. Write or print out some Scripture verses on index cards and tape them up around your room. If that's too embarrassing, put them somewhere only you will see them, daily. When you see it don't just read it but pray it and pray for strength to live out the Truth God shares through it. Some verses to start out with: Matthew 5:28, 1 Corinthians 6:18–20, Galatians 5:19.

For Young Adults:

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4. How do you see God working in your life for your sanctification? Do your relationships help you with this process of growing in holiness? What kind of decisions can you make to grow in holiness when you are by yourself AND with others?

2. Download and install “Covenant Eyes” or another similar accountability software and find an accountability partner to help you grow in chastity.

3. Replace idle time spent on Instagram, Youtube, or Facebook with prayer. Pray the rosary daily and/or spend time before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration each week.

One of the best ways to grow in chastity is to begin denying our bodily passions and affections.

For Adults:

1. Married couples do something special for your spouse in the next couple of weeks to show your devoted commitment to fidelity. Single adults, pray a rosary for an increase in chastity and also for the healing of all difficult relationships either in marriage or friendships.

2. Read Galatians 5:16–26. This commandment is not just concerned with marital infidelity but also about respect of human dignity in all relationships. We may not be guilty of everything in this list of St. Paul’s but find something that challenges you in your own life. Bring this imperfection or sinful action in your life to prayer each day, asking God for the grace to

improve and grow in virtue and to help you eliminate this behavior.

3. If you have a family consider downloading and installing Covenant Eyes on all of your devices. Even if you are single, pray about choosing an accountability partner to help you grow in chastity by using this software.

4. Practice voluntary penances. One of the best ways to grow in chastity is to begin denying our bodily passions and affections. Go without dessert sometimes, take a cold shower, choose prayer over time on the computer, do pushups instead of watching YouTube. All of these “small” actions can help us grow in virtue, instead of always giving in to our lower faculties and emotions.

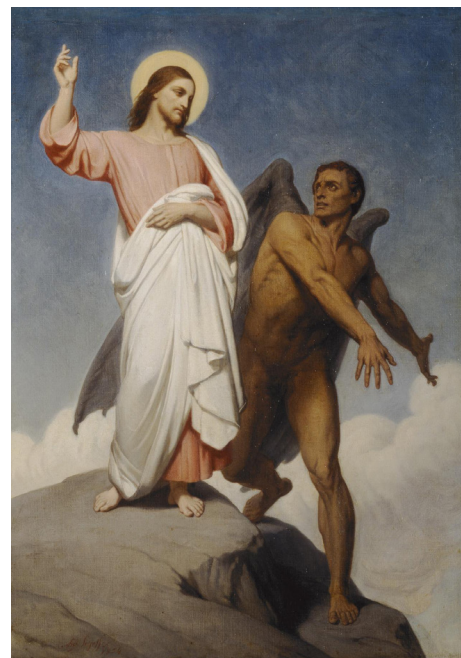
For Ministry Leaders

1. The Sixth Commandment helps us to reflect on viewing each other as gifts from God, rather than objects. When thinking about your ministry, do you see it as a gift from God? Do you think about how each of your volunteers is a gift to your ministry and our parish?

2. We are especially blessed at St. Mary with the DCJM and their special love for families. Spend some time simply being grateful for that gift.

3. Spend some time praying in a special way with this commandment, for all people who struggle with living out the virtue of chastity.

4. Pray with Genesis 1:27: “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” What does this passage say about human dignity? How does this relate to the sixth commandment?



The Temptation of Christ, Ary Scheffer, 1854

We invite you to listen to our parish podcast “Gratia Plena: A St. Mary Podcast” available on our website, Apple and Google Podcasts, and Spotify!