

## Chastity 2352

1. Chastity is a virtue under the moral virtue of temperance. Temperance, one of the four cardinal virtues, enables us to control our desires and to use rightly the things that please our senses. Temperance teaches us the proper use of the good and pleasurable objects that God has created. When temperance is not practiced, the good and pleasurable things God created are misused and thus, perverted. Chastity enables us to control our desires and to use rightly the things that please our sexual senses. When chastity is not practiced, the good and pleasurable things God created are misused and thus, perverted. God created sex for two reasons: the unity of a married couple and the procreation of life. If sexual acts are used for any other reason, the act is against God's will and is an act of perversion. The perversion due to the misuse of a good leads to the deprivation of that good, which is sin. When a person uses another person as an object for sexual pleasure, they are depriving both people of the good for which sex was created. When chastity is not practiced, sexual acts are misused, people are used as objects and the beauty of sex is perverted. This is precisely why we call people perverts, because sexual misuse perverts the goodness God created. Section 2352 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church gives us the outline on how to practice the virtue of chastity to a heroic degree. Section 2352 says, "The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason outside of marriage is contrary to its purpose." This sentence, which is the outline of this booklet, is taken from a declaration of the Doctrine of Faith entitled *Persona Humana*. Pope Paul VI approved this Declaration "On certain questions concerning sexual ethics," confirmed it, and ordered its publication at an audience on November 7, 1975.

### Contrary to its purpose

2. What is the purpose of sex? Things are created for certain reasons. A cell phone is created to communicate with people to send and receive messages. If a cell phone were used as a hammer, not only would the cell phone not be able to hammer a nail effectively, but the cell phone would get damaged. Just like a cell phone, sex was created for a special reason. God is the source of all goodness and God created sex. Very often people think the Church says sex is bad. This is completely untrue. The Church says that sex is from God and that it has a specific purpose.

3. Once I heard a first grader say to his classmate, "Do you want to know what sex is?" I was very curious to find out what the first grader's answer was. He went on to say, "Sex is when you're married and you going to have a baby." The first grader was completely right, God created sex for two reasons: the unity of a married couple and the procreation of life. Servant of God John Paul the Great referred to sex as the gift of self or the marital act. Sex has become a misused and misunderstood. The phrases "marital act" and "gift of self" describes the purpose of sex - the gift of self between husband and wife that is always open to life. This gift is perhaps the greatest act of charity that can take place within a marriage. It is an honor that man and woman, through the marital act, are asked by God to help pro-create. God, the Author of Life, can choose any means to write into existence His creation. God chooses the unity and love between husband and wife through the marital act as the soil in which life begins. Sex is not just good! Sex is holy. Sex is an honor, a privilege, and a response to the call of God.

4. When are sexual acts in accordance to God's will? When are sexual acts contrary to God's will? To answer these questions you simply have to apply the sexual act, whatever it may be, to the two purposes that God wills for sexual activity. Is the sexual activity open to creation of life? Does the sexual act bring about the unity of a married couple? Some of these sexual activities are spoken of in the catechism (sections 2351-2356). The following sins are examples of how sexual acts are misused.

5. Masturbation is the disordered desire for self-induced sexual pleasure. This sexual act can never bring about unity of a couple, unless you are married to yourself, which is impossible. Have you ever heard of a case in which masturbation has created life? No.

6. Fornication is a disordered desire for sexual pleasure between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. Sex before marriage is not the unity of a married couple because it is sex outside of marriage. The vast majority of sexual activity before marriage is not open to life, but instead purposely attempts to prevent life.

7. Adultery is the disordered desire for sexual pleasure with someone other than your spouse. Sex with someone other than your spouse is sex outside of marriage and brings disunity to a married couple and perhaps two marriages. Once

again, those who are having an affair by committing adultery try to keep things secret. The last thing both adulterers want is to create a life, which would give proof of their infidelity.

8. Homosexual activity is a disorder and contrary to natural law. Sexual activity between homosexuals cannot unite a married couple because marriage can only be between man and woman. Homosexual sex is a mockery of the heterosexual marital act. Biologically, the pieces don't fit. God did not create man to be with man and woman to be with woman. Sexual activity between homosexuals cannot create life.

9. Birth Control – just look at the name. Who is controlling birth, controlling life? God is in control of life. When we attempt to control birth and life, we choose who will live and who will die. We attempt to be like God. Birth control does not unite a married couple. The condom is also known as the “barrier method”. Do you put up a barrier when you want to unite? From the beginning of time, cultures have prayed, sacrificed and worshiped fertility gods. The Aztecs worshiped Tlazoiteotl; the Egyptians, Isis; the Greeks, Aphrodite; the Hindus, Shiva and for a time, the Hebrews abandoned the one true God and began to worship Baal, also known as a fertility god. Pagans asked for the gift of fertility, valued fertility and were open to the sacredness of pregnancy and life. Why is it that our modern culture views fertility as a curse, which is not valued and attacked using measures such as abortion?

10. Lust is a disordered desire for sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure sought only for itself. One person becomes the object of other person's pleasure.

Pornography is a perversion that removes sexual acts from the intimacy of married partners for the profit of others and the use of individuals.

Prostitution is a perversion in which people are reduced to an instrument of sexual pleasure. This sin totally destroys the dignity of the people involved and the sexual act itself.

Rape is a violent perversion and the forcible violation of the sexual intimacy of another person. It deeply wounds the respect, freedom, physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right.

Many other sexual activities such as oral sex, anal sex and other sexual activities can also be applied and the truth discovered if two questions are asked of the activity.

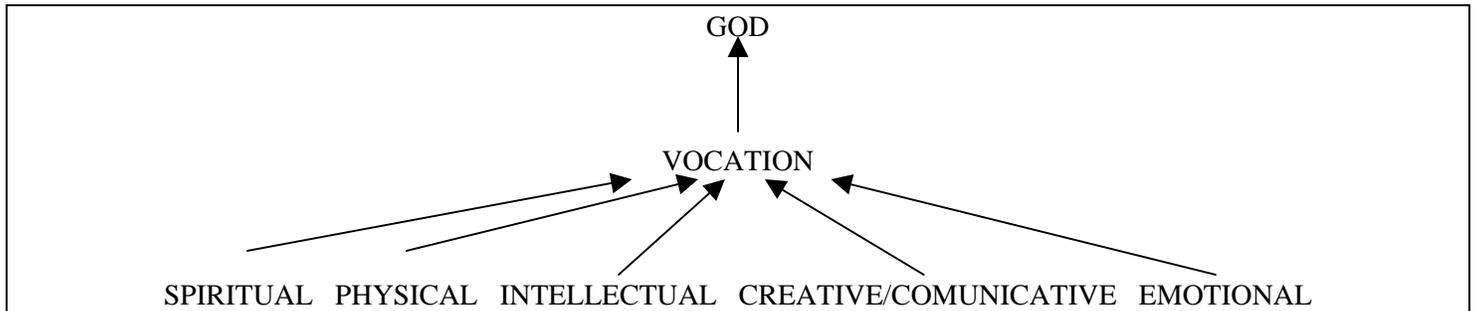
1. Does the activity unite a married couple?
2. Is the activity open to life and able to transmit life?

11. What if I have been sexually active? If someone were to use the cell phone as a hammer or misuse the phone in any other way, I would suggest they use the cell phone the right way and stop using it the wrong way. If you or anyone you know has misused sexual activity, start right now to learn the value and purpose of sexual activity and make a firm commitment to use sexual activity only for the purpose God intends. Saint Peter says, “Stay sober and alert. Your opponent the devil is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, solid in your faith.” Faith is the teaching of Christ and His Church. In regards to sexual activity the teaching of Christ and His Church is to use sexual activity for procreation and unity of a married couple. Our opponent the devil is attempting to devour us through sexual sin and impurity, we must be solid in our purpose to engage in sexual activity only when it is open to life and uniting a married couple. We ask the prayers of great Saints and martyrs such as Saints Agatha, Agnes and Maria Goretti, Joseph the Patriarch, Saint Thomas Aquinas and other who resisted sexual impurity, solid in the faith. The greatest victory satan can gain over us is to make us think that we are unforgivable, that we can never be pure again. Do not fall for this trap and this lie. God's mercy is far greater than our sin. If you have committed sexual activity outside of God's purpose and have lived an impure life follow the advise of Jesus. Saint Mary Magdalene was caught in the act of adultery. Jesus looked her, as he looks us in the eyes and says, “Go and sin no more”. Those who have created habits of sexual sin may think this is impossible. Saint Therese says, “Our Father does not inspire us to do what cannot be done.” You can and must be pure and with Confession and God's grace you can be pure and stay pure.

## For whatever reason

12. What are the reasons people give for engaging in sexual activity? Most will say that it is out of love or to feel close to another. Some will say they engage in sexual activity because it feels good. Pope Benedict XVI in his first encyclical entitled, "God is Love," warned that when the reason for sexual activity is simply for pleasure, the body is reduced to a mere commodity that can be bought and sold. Saint Augustine says, "we are restless until we rest in God." The heart of every man is restless and so it is natural for man to want to give his heart to another rather than God, to find rest and union in another rather than God.

13. People want to give themselves to others, but they don't know how to give and very often don't know what to give. Our sexuality is the gift of ourselves. The ultimate goal of life is to give to God the gift of self. It is our vocation that helps us direct or funnel our gift of self to God. The gift of self includes five elements, which can be remembered using the word S.P.I.C.E. Your sexuality is who you are, it is how you give the gift of yourself to God through your vocation. To put it simply, you're "SPICEy". You share the gift of yourself with God through your vocation in the following five ways: spiritually, physically, intellectually, creatively/communicatively and emotionally (SPICE). In order to answer your vocation, you must first learn to give yourself to God. It becomes very easy to focus only on the physical because it is tangible and has to do with our immediate senses. God calls each of us to purify, perfect and present these gifts of ourselves. We must purify these gifts and continue to keep them pure. We must allow God's Grace to nurture, mature and perfect these gifts. We must present these gifts to God and to others. Even while discerning our vocation, we must begin to purify, perfect and present our gifts, carefully listening to God's call in order to best give ourselves to Him.



14. Whatever vocation God calls you to, the calling is to give your full self (SPICE) to God and others. Chastity is the school of the gift of self. School is important for any kind of formation. If you are going to be a doctor, you go to medical school. If you are in sports, you practice hard and play on many teams learning how to perfect and develop your game. If you are studying to be a priest, you attend seminary for 8 years. By law, we all attend 12 years of school so that we learn the basic skills in life necessary to work and function. The most important school in life is the school which teaches us about who we are, the gift we have been given by God, and how to give it to God and others. Saint Francis prayed the following prayer regularly, "Who are You? Who am I?" Saint Francis knew that he would never know who he was until he began to know who God was. It is Christ who perfectly reveals to us who we are and the gift of self that we can give. In this school of the gift of self, Chastity is our teacher. She teaches us how to give our whole self to God through our future vocation.

15. How long do I have to stay in the school of the gift of self? From the time people are teenagers the following questions run through out the mind. What is the purpose of life? Who am I? What am I called to be? Who is God and what role does He play in my life? Many people who are striving to do God's will get very frustrated and anxious about not knowing God's will for their life and their vocation (what God is calling them to do). Most people will not embrace the vocation that God is calling them to until their early or mid twenties. This means that we have the great opportunity of entering into the school of the gift of self as a teenager. The school of the gift of self, with the virtue of chastity as the teacher, teaches us who we are. This school of the gift of self continues our whole life. It is important; however, not to wait until entering your vocation to enroll in this school. The teenage and young adult years are pivotal years in becoming an apprentice in this school, enabling you to become a master as you embrace your vocation. Don't stress about the future. Stay in school and learn about the gift of self. You cannot give the gift of self if you don't know what that gift is. As an apprentice in the school of the gift of self, learn to pray and learn to practice chastity. Build a strong foundation that any vocation can be built upon.

16. Don't let your springs overflow. Listen to the wisdom of the Proverbs. "Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely hind, a graceful doe. Let her affection fill you at all times with delight, be infatuated always with her love. Why should you be infatuated, my son, with a loose woman and embrace the bosom of an adventuress? For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he watches all his paths. The inequities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is caught in the toils of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is lost."

17. Your springs are the gift of your self. The spiritual, intellectual, physical, creative and communicative, and emotional make up who you are and these should be given to God alone. The vocation you embrace should be the vocation which will allow you to best give these parts of yourself to God. The proverb says do not give it to anyone else. Don't let your springs be scattered abroad in the street to be embraced by strangers. Three times in the Song of Solomon it says, "do not stir up nor awaken love until God desires" (2:7) Don't drop out of the school of the gift of self. Be cool and stay in school until God stirs up that love and until He desires. How will you know when God desires? It has been said many times, "You will just know!" You will know your vocation. God is faithful. Stay in the school of the gift of self and God will reveal your vocation to you. You must know yourself before you can give yourself. Being single and appreciating the gift of singleness enables you to truly attend the school of the gift of self. Your vocation enables you to give the gift of yourself to God the rest of your earthly life, preparing you for eternal life.

18. Jesus says in the sixth chapter of Matthew's gospel, "Do not give to dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn to attack you." No one would throw valuable pearls into a pin of muddy pigs. No one would flush a thousand dollar bill down the toilet. When something is valuable and of worth that item is protected and not given over for destruction or misuse. We must learn to value and keep safe the gift of self, which is not just what we give, but who we are. The gift of self is the greatest, most precious, valuable gift you have. Don't give to dogs what is holy. Don't give to dogs the gift of yourself, which is holy. Don't throw your pearls (the gift of self) before swine. Many men have been called dirty pigs or swine and yet many women continue to throw themselves to these swine. The gift of self will be trampled on and attacked if it is not protected, cherished and safeguarded. People fall into sexual sin because they don't value the gift of self. When we see young men and women throwing themselves and their bodies to the dogs and the swine, we must convince them that they are valuable, precious and holy.

## Outside of Marriage

19. We are all called to give the gift of ourselves to God. Our vocation is the means through which we give this gift. Some give the gift of themselves through the single or consecrated life. Some give the gift of themselves through the religious life as a brother or sister. Some give the gift of themselves through the Sacrament of Ordination to the Holy Priesthood. Some give the gift of themselves through the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. As a human, you are a gift from God. Because you come from God, you give the gift of yourself back to God. The vocation that God calls you to enables you to give the gift of yourself fully to Him. Think of the most successful, happy and holy marriage you know of. Maybe your grandparents or another loving, long lasting marriage comes to mind. What qualities and virtues are found in that marriage? Usually qualities such as selflessness, sacrifice, permanence, faithfulness and love are present in these long lasting marriages. All vocations if they are going to be an example of Christ's love for the Church, and thus are going to be successful, must have these qualities.

20. A vocation must be Permanent, Exclusive, and Procreative. The Church teaches that marriage must have these elements to succeed. "It [marriage] aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility." (FC 13)

21. Indissolubility means that the marriage union is permanent. No divorce or separation. This is the real deal. What God has brought together let no man separate. The vocation of the religious life, Holy Orders, and lay consecrated also must be permanent in that the person remains in that vocation and the vocation helps them toward heaven. The vows of chastity, poverty and obedience are a pledge of their permanence.

22. Faithfulness means that the marriage union is exclusive. The husband gives the gift of himself completely to his wife solely. The wife gives the gift of herself completely to her husband solely. The same is true of the vocation of the

religious life, Holy Orders, and lay consecrated who give themselves exclusively to God through their community and the Church. Exclusive means only one. They do not give themselves to more than one.

23. Open to fertility means that the marriage union is open to procreation. The husband and wife, created in the image of God, join with God in the creation of new life. The couple must always be open to the creation of life and the nurturing of that life. The religious life, Holy Orders and lay consecrated are definitely procreative. Although they do not procreate physically, they must be procreative through nurturing and supporting the spiritual life of all souls. When it comes to vocations, three pillars are necessary: Permanence, Exclusivity, and Procreation.

24. What makes good and holy marriages? Saint Angela Merici said, "Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family." Marriage is the rock and central unit of the family, so if there is disorder in marriage, there will be disorder in the family. If there is disorder in the family, there will be disorder in society. If we are to bring back order to society, we need to begin by placing order back into marriage. When marriages are not permanent, disorder occurs. In a very changing world, children and spouses need the security of permanence. Children wonder if their parents will divorce and, if so, where will they end up? A builder can only build a solid house on a permanent foundation. Families are unable to build, grow, and flourish unless they have the firm foundation of permanence. "Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell; and great was the fall of it." Unfortunately many "homes" (families) are not built on permanence and when the rain, floods and winds of a culture of lies, death and temptation come, the homes (families) fall. How great the fall has been in our society.

25. When marriages are not exclusive, disorder occurs. In a sacramental marriage, husband and wife mirror the relationship between Christ and His Church, between God and His people. Is Christ always faithful to the Church? Yes! Is God always faithful to His people? Yes! Christ prayed to his Father, "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one." Just as Christ and God are one, the Church is one. And Christ loves the Church. He is faithful to the Church. He is exclusive with the Church and through His death, has offered salvation to all through the Church. He will never abandon His love for the Church for another. When exclusivity is not found in a relationship, jealousy, doubt and fear enter in. Questions such as, "Is my spouse cheating on me?" or "Does my spouse still love me?" or "What am I doing wrong?" or "What am I not giving my spouse that they want?" enter into the mind. Mass media presents relationships with no exclusivity. All we see are relationships in which people are cheating on each other, sleeping with each other, flirting with each other. Our society does not have a concept of being faithful and exclusive to one person. Relationships cannot be formed without the central premise of exclusivity, because without it there can be no trust. A husband and wife who are exclusive can completely trust each other and know that the gift of self will not be given to any other. They are also completely satisfied with receiving the gift of self from each other and only each other.

26. When marriages are not open to procreation disorder occurs. Some couples are unable physically to procreate due to biological reasons. Couples who are able to procreate and choose not to based on selfish reasons are not living what it means to be married. "The spouses' union [sexual intercourse] 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." (2363) To be open to procreation means to embrace the fact that sexual intercourse is designed by God for two reasons: the unity of a married couple and the transmission of new life. Artificial birth control has allowed spouses to use each other as sexual objects and has prevented God and the couple from creating new life. Marriages must be open to life! It is truly a matter of life and death for future souls. When marriages are not open to life, a natural result is disunity between the couple. When a couple is not open to the creation of life, the most basic means of uniting, how can they truly be united in other areas of creativity?

27. "Outside of marriage" could also be titled "before marriage". What do we do before marriage? How does dating and friendship before marriage, before our vocation, lead us to embracing our vocation. The Church does not have an official teaching on dating. Dating is a cultural issue and in each culture it is different. Since America is predominately protestant, the value of religious life, consecrated life and the priesthood is not a considered reality for most of America. Most Americans view marriage or single life as the only vocation with two steps toward marriage: friendship and dating. Although the Church does not have an official teaching on dating, the Church does teach very clearly what is necessary

for a good, holy marriage. What is the best preparation for a good, holy marriage, or a good holy vocation? What does friendship do to prepare for vocation? What does dating do to prepare for vocation? What does dating give you that friendship doesn't?

28. It is foolish to build a house on no foundation. It is also foolish to embrace a vocation without preparation and formation. As it was said in section 24, "Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." The foundation must be built first and then the house. The foundation is formation and preparation for a vocation. The house is the vocation. The foundation of any vocation includes a correct understanding and practice of permanence, exclusivity and respect for life. Generally, this foundation is formed between the ages of 12 to 22, and sometimes longer in our modern society. Dating is not needed, and should be avoided during these years. What is needed most during the foundation years, are good, holy friendships. A person should date and search for permanence and exclusivity only when they have first laid a solid foundation. Once a solid foundation is laid, a person should date and they should date with a purpose. The purpose should be to build on the foundation that has taken years to create. The purpose should be to find a spouse or community in which permanence; exclusivity and openness to life can be fully entered into. Dating during the years of preparation and formation years is not needed and is a distraction and hindrance to proper preparation and formation. Dating during the years of preparation and formation can distort God's call, muffling the call or causing a person to not hear God's call at all. What does dating during these years give that friendship doesn't? Sections 29-35 answer this question.

29. Dating creates a false sense of permanence! It has been said a million times. Don't have sex before you are married. Sex is only for marriage. Think about this. Don't enter into a permanent relationship with anyone before you are married. Permanence is only for marriage. A dating relationship, from the beginning is set up to be permanent. Modern dating has even been called "mini marriages" set up to end in divorce. I have never heard of two people that say, "Let's date for 6 months and then break up." When two people begin dating they think that it is permanent. How many times have you seen graffiti that says, "Anne and John forever." How many songs and movies have been based on the idea of "our love is forever" or "no one can break us apart". Dating prematurely sets up two people to fail in the virtue of permanence. Many times, the couple thinks it will last forever, that they will get married and live happily ever after. Instead, they are constantly let down when they break up. When permanence is repeated and a sense of failure becomes habitual, the concept of permanence can be easily weakened in the eyes of the individuals. When individuals finally enter into a marriage, they can easily carry t negative views of permanence with them. Almost all, if not all, dating relationships end with a break up. Relationships before marriage are not supposed to be permanent, so why set them up to be permanent through dating? When two people are ready to get married, and they begin to date, then and only then would it be appropriate to start thinking about a permanent relationship. Further, those two people should not date at all unless they feel that the relationship could end in marriage and thus in permanence.

30. Dating creates a false sense of exclusivity! It has been said a million times. Don't have sex before you are married. Sex is only for marriage. Think about this. Don't enter into an exclusive relationship with anyone before you are married. Exclusivity is only for marriage. A dating relationship, from the beginning, is set up to be exclusive. A girl who dates a guy expresses that she will not place any other guy in the "place" that she has placed her boyfriend. She commits that she will not do things with others that she would only do with him. A guy makes the same commitment to his girlfriend. They make the commitment to be exclusive. These commitments include things like: I will only hold hands with you. I will only share deep personal feelings with you. I will talk with or IM you more than any other person. I will spend time with you more than others in my life, I will only buy you special gifts on certain days. These commitments and others which go along with exclusivity are unending. Therefore, faithfulness in an exclusive relationship is not necessarily based on love, but on faithfulness to the things both people said they would do. If they do all the things they committed to do they are seen as "romantic" or "a great boyfriend or girlfriend". Dating is always based on these commitments. If a girl is dating a guy, she commits to hanging out with him, talking to him, going to events with him, etc. What if this girl were to start hanging out with another guy more, talking to this other guy more and even going to events with this other guy rather than her boyfriend? It would only make sense that her boyfriend would get mad, feel as if he was being cheated on and that his girlfriend is unfaithful. If she continued to hang out with the new guy, she has now formed an exclusive relationship with the new guy. It is impossible to be in two exclusive relationships. The girl has only one option. She must break up with her old boyfriend and end her exclusive relationship with him, so that she can begin a new exclusive relationships he moves on from one exclusive relationship to another. On and on and on. Why be exclusive with anyone? Friendship allows you to have the freedom of never being exclusive until you are ready to get married. The appropriate time to be exclusive is when two people are ready to get married.

31. Dating creates an atmosphere in which sexual activity is often misused! Dating sets two people up to be sexual and often pressures them into a sexual relationship. By sexual I am not talking about sexual intercourse only, but all sexual acts, which arouse. If two people have been dating for a few weeks or months and they show no sign of sexual affection such as holding hands, kissing, etc., their friends begin to ask why. Their friends may even ask why they are dating at all if they never show affection. Sexual activity such as holding hands, kissing, touching, making out are all outward signs of the permanent and exclusive dating relationship that the two are involved in. By holding hands, kissing, touching, making out, etc. the couple is telling everyone, "Look at us. We are permanent and exclusive." There is also the pressure to increase sexual activities the longer two people are together. The increased sexual activities are justified by the time they have dated (permanence) and also by their faithfulness to each other (exclusivity) The false sense of permanence and exclusivity that is established in dating justifies sexual activities. The more permanence and exclusivity that is experienced adds to an increase in sexual activity. The permanence and exclusivity within a marriage coupled with sexual activity, leads to unity and procreation. This unity and procreation that is set aside for marriage alone should never be entered into outside of the marriage bond. Sexual acts are intended to lead up to intercourse. Dating pressures two people into entering into acts which are designed to lead to intercourse and intended for marriage.

32. Dating creates an atmosphere in which people have the power to decide how far sexually they will go! People that ask, "How far is too far go?" are asking the wrong question. People should not be asking how far is too far to go because they should not be going anywhere at all. You cannot go far if you don't go at all. Anytime a person deliberately uses the sexual faculty they are going somewhere. The sexual faculty is the genital organs. Use of the sexual faculty means not just sexual intercourse but every kind of genital activity, whether committed alone or with someone else. Any sexual action, which would cause you to sexually arouse another, or another to arouse you, is to be avoided outside of marriage. We should strive to avoid every occasion to sin and to not place ourselves in a situation where we could sin. Placing yourself in a dating relationship before you are ready to get married is placing yourself in a situation where you will have to decide how far you will go sexually. Don't go there at all! Stay friends. Friendship doesn't place that pressure on you.

33. Dating creates an environment in which the senses are heightened. When we attend the school of the gift of self, we learn the purpose of our life. What am I called to be? What is God asking of me? Servant of God, John Paul the Great says, "Life is not a series of sensations to be experienced but a work to be accomplished." Dating is full of sensations. These sensations are physical and can often lead to sexual sins. These sensations are emotions wrapped up in romance and false love. The focus of dating is very often based more on the physical and emotional sensations between two people than on the work that two individuals are meant to accomplish. The fact is that we all experience sensations. When sensations become so much a part of our life that we focus more on them and feeling them than on the work that we are to accomplish, we have lost our purpose in life. The school of the gift of self is a place where we develop friendships that help us focus on the work we were created by God to accomplish through our vocation. Saint Josemaria Escriva says, "You're bored? That's because you keep your senses awake, while your soul is asleep." Dating establishes a relationship in which the physical and emotional senses are awake and the soul is very often asleep. When people are bored the first way to solve the solution of boredom is to satisfy the senses. Let's go to a movie. Let's go shopping. Let's go out to eat. Let's make out. The challenge in life, which is learned at the school of the gift of self, is to wake up the soul, to satisfy the soul, and to embrace eternal joy and purpose in life.

34. Dating gives people a title and a reputation! What if two people are doing everything just right and are neither exclusive nor permanent and are sexually pure and discovering their gift? If they are doing all of this then they are not really dating. Even if they are doing all these things they still have the title of boyfriend, girlfriend and say they are dating. This title alone gives them a reputation and tells others that they are off limits. Just by the title alone they have given everyone else that knows they are dating the message that they are exclusive and ideas form in the heads of others about what their relationship may entail. So if you are doing everything just right, are neither exclusive nor permanent, are sexually pure, and discovering your gift...LOSE THE TITLE...don't bear false witness. What until you are ready to get married, then date.

35. Dating often ruins what could have been a good friendship. We have all heard the advice many times, "If you really like a person as a friend, don't start dating them or you will probably end up not even being friends." This is very true. After breaking up, many couples no longer want to talk to each other, see each other and might even avoid each other.

36. If I can't date until I am ready to get married, when do I know I am I ready to get married? Ask a different question. Maybe your calling in life is to be a surgeon. What would happen if you, as a teenager, went to the nearest hospital and

asked to fill out an application to be a surgeon in the ER. The hospital would laugh at you. They would say you are not qualified. You might respond saying, "Well, I like to cut things and heal people and I really, really want to be a surgeon." They would respond back saying, "Go to school, learn medicine and then come back in 6-10 years and then maybe you can get the job." The truth is that people are not ready to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage until they know the gift of self they have to offer, are ready to give that gift of self, and are able to support themselves. Until that time, stay in the school of the gift of self through the virtue of Chastity, and you will learn all that is needed to enter into the vocation of marriage or any other vocation.

37. What roles do emotions and flirting play? You might be thinking, "This makes sense so far. I'm not going to date until I am ready to get married." That's good, but it is still possible for you to give yourself to someone emotionally without even dating him or her. When you have a crush on someone, constantly talk about him or her, and always think of what it would be like to date them, it is almost as if you are dating them. You have given yourself to them emotionally. Even though you would never actually date them, your obsession with them distracts you from entering the school of the gift of self. Some crushes keep people obsessed and in a daze for months, even years. Don't give yourself to people emotionally whether they are people in your life or even famous singers, athletes, movie stars, etc. You might also say, "I would never date that person but I like them." What does that mean? Do you like them more than other friends? You are already giving yourself to them emotionally. When you tell everyone that you "like" them but would never date them, you are placing that person in a place emotionally that you do not place anyone else. If you plan on not dating till you are ready to get married, then make it very clear to all of your friends through your words and actions that this is your belief. If you say you are not interested in dating until you are ready to get married and then flirt with everyone, what are you really saying through your actions? Saint Francis said, "Preach and if you must use words." So much of how we relate with people of the opposite sex is through our actions. Let your actions reflect your beliefs.

38. There is also the fear in our society, which says, "If I don't date the person I like, someone else might date them and I will lose my chance." It's all about trust. Do you completely trust God with your future, with your vocation? It says in scripture that no man should separate what God has brought together. In the same way two people should not bring together what God has not willed to be brought together. If you have a friend that you think might one day be a possible spouse, being friends with that person is the best thing you can do. By practicing the philosophy of not dating until you are ready to get married, you and your friends know that you are not going to date anyone else. If your friends practice the same philosophy they will also not date anyone else. Friends who wait until they are ready to get married to date can trust completely in God's will and God's timing. Pray that your future spouse will practice the same philosophy.

39. This is real life and everyone is going out on dates and asking people to events, so who am I supposed to go with me to banquets, games, events, etc? The person that does not date can ask friends. They will have plenty of them to choose from when they are not dating. The most important thing is act as a friend at the banquet, game, events, etc. Don't introduce your friend as your boyfriend or girlfriend and make sure people know that you are just friends.

40. It is OK to say no. When someone asks you out tell them that you don't date. Tell them that you aren't going to date until you are ready to get married. When they think you are weird, then give them this pamphlet. Tell them that it is nothing against them. Not only are you not interested in dating them but, in fact, you are not interested in dating anyone. If they are still interested in being your friend then that is great, if not, then it would not have been a good relationship anyway.

41. What about high school sweethearts? First of all, high school sweethearts are very rare. I was unable to find any statistics on the rate of how many high school sweethearts actually end up marrying and then, most importantly, actually stay married. Whatever the numbers are I am sure they are very low. There are good, holy marriages of people that were high school sweethearts, but the question is this, could they still have had the same holy marriage if they would have remained friends instead of dating?

42. What if I am already dating? Break up! Most importantly let people know why you are waiting until you are ready to get marriage to start dating. If you have given yourself to others emotionally or physically in ways contrary to God's will then go to confession. That is what confession is for. We feel sorrow for what we have done, we confess what we have done and we pledge to not enter into those sins again. Do not be afraid! Pray. Go to confession, enter the school of the gift of self and allow yourself to be transformed by the virtue of Chastity.

43. This is a hard teaching. It is not hard. It is different. Many people are pressured into dating relationships in junior high or even earlier. The pressure to start hooking up and going out with someone usually comes from friends or being asked by someone and not knowing what to say. Also the pressure may come from parents or your family. Many parents may say, "You can't start dating until your 16." Many times people think that they need to start dating at 16, since they have permission to. The sad fact is that our society says that people are weird that go through high school and even college without dating. It is totally pressure from our society that makes this teaching hard. What will be much harder is not embracing the vocation that God has called you to or not being about to fully give the gift of your self to God through your vocation.

## The sexual faculty

44. The sexual faculty is a name for the genital organs. Through the genital organs the body is able to be aroused. This arousal leads to and prepares a married couple to give the whole gift of self to each other in the marital act. Think of a great Italian cook spending all day cooking an amazing Italian feast. The preparation and ingredients mixing together fill the kitchen and whole house with a great aroma that prepares the senses for the meal. It would be cruel to be around the aroma all day and to never taste the feast. The preparation and action go hand in hand. Many people say don't have sex before marriage. This is not enough. Don't engage in sexual activity before marriage. Remember the song "Love and marriage". The lyrics are "love and marriage, love and marriage, they go together like a horse and carriage, this I'll tell you brother you can't have one without the other... Try, try, try to separate them it's an illusion." Not only can you not separate love and marriage but you should not separate arousal from the marital act, sexual activity and sexual intercourse go together. You can't have one without the other.

45. How far is too far? This is the wrong question. You can't go far if you don't go at all. Remember this! Don't do anything to purposely arouse another. Don't allow anyone to purposely arouse you and don't arouse yourself. One of the beatitudes is, Blessed are the pure of heart, they shall see God. In this beatitude, which also is worded the single hearted, Jesus is saying that those how have a heart directed to God first are the blessed. Is our love, affection, desire ordered or directed toward God. Lust is a disordered desire, a longing for fulfillment in things other than God. This disordered desire, fueled by the temporal senses, abandons eternal fulfillment. If we are pure, we see God, if we are impure our vision is blurred and we see only false illusions, distractions. Purity begins with our thoughts. Controlling arousal begins with our thoughts. Saint Bernard says, "Thoughts lead to pleasure, pleasure to consent, consent to action, action to habit, habit to necessity. The dire necessity of the senses makes those senses and that which appeal to the senses a god. We begin to need them. We know, love and serve that which appeals to our senses instead of knowing, loving and serving God, who appeals to body and soul. If we are pure, we shall see God. If a person has sexual thoughts and dwells on those thoughts they will bring pleasure. Sexual fantasy, the fostering of thoughts through pornography, or simply looking at people, as object for sexual pleasure will eventually lead to consent. People begin to say, "If I had the chance to act out my fantasies and thoughts, if I had a chance to be with that person I would." This consent can lead to action. The sexual act, like all senses is addictive and can lead to habit, and habits lead to necessity. People begin to need sex, to need that other person. Sex becomes a god in which all is sacrificed. The sex god becomes more important than healthy relationships, babies in the womb, family life, meaningful conversations, etc.

## Deliberate use

46. The spiritual, physical, intellectual, communicative, creative and emotional gift of our self is for others and defines our relationship with others. Our life and gift of self is a work to be accomplished. Will we allow God's grace to transform our gift of self, enabling us to be useful? Our gift of self will either be useful or very often be used and abused. In our modern society people are used as objects for the pleasure of others. This deliberate use is often mutual, in which two people agree to use each other for selfish pleasure. Pornography, clothes, ads, misuse and pervert the gift of self. Servant of God, John Paul the Great said that the problem with pornography is that it does not show enough. Pornography does not show the soul, it does not show the gift of self. Instead the gift of self and the soul is masked, distorted and perverted. The gift of self is not kept pure, it is not perfected and it is not presented to God, but instead to anyone and everyone who will readily use and abuse it. Life is no longer the gift of self a work to accomplish. Life is reduced to a series of sensations.

47. How does a person offer the gift of self to God? How does a person purify, perfect and present the gift of self? How does one use the gift of self rather than allow the gift of self to be used and abused. We must be consecrated to Christ, through the most pure Blessed Virgin Mary. To be consecrated is to be set aside, used for a specific purpose. A chalice at Mass is set aside, used to hold the precious Blood of our Lord. Imagine that you were playing basketball or another sport at a friend's house and became very thirsty. Your friend invites you in for a drink, goes into the cabinet in the kitchen, pulls out a chalice from the cabinet, fills the chalice with ice and then Kool-Aid. As a Catholic, this would disturb you and you might even refuse to drink from it because that is not what chalices are used for. In the same way, if we are consecrated to Christ, we can only use the gift of self for those things that Christ has called us to use the gift of self for.

## Totus Tuus

48. The "Totus Tuus" (Totally Yours) prayer, which Servant of God, John Paul the Great wrote and recited daily is a great example of how to give the gift of yourself to God. This prayer, which is a prayer to the Blessed Mother, the perfect model of chastity unites our words with the very words Mary and our actions with her humble and submissive actions. This prayer, which is a consecration to Christ through the loving and pure hands of our lady is also an examination of conscience, in which we can truly understand if we are fully surrendering the gift of our self.

*I belong to you entirely*

Spiritually do I belong entirely to God? Do I allow my soul which was created to know, love and serve God to actually know God more, love God more and serve God more? Do I embrace my Faith which God has given me enabling me to believe and follow the teachings of Christ and His Church?

Physically do I belong to God? Do I use my body as a temple of the Holy Spirit? Do I use my physical abilities to glorify God? Is God able to use my body as a vessel to accomplish His holy will?

Intellectually do I belong to God? How often do I think of God? Do I use the gift of Faith to learn more about how God has revealed Himself to Me? Is God on my mind?

Do I belong to God in my creativeness and communication? God is the Father and creator of all, do I imitate God and create good things in my life or do I do the opposite of creation, which is chaos? Saint Dominic said speak to God or of God. Do I communicate with God? When I communicate with others do I speak about God?

Emotionally do I belong to God? Let's look at the beatitudes. Do I hunger and thirst for God? Emotionally do I need God more than anything else? Do I depend on Him more than anything else? Do I want Him more than anything else?

*And all that I possess is yours*

Spiritually do I give my soul to God? Is God truly able to mold my soul? Does He possess my soul?

Physically do I give all my physical / material possessions to God? All that I possess. Think of all that I possess? My TV, computer, car, music, talents, all that stuff, even my most prized possession. Does God possess that stuff and do I allow Him to use it for His Glory? What if He was to ask me to get rid of it?

Intellectually does God possess my mind? My thoughts? Does He possess the things I study, my dreams, my hopes that run through my mind?

Does God possess my creativity and communication? Is God able to use my mind and talents to create good things for others and for others? Do I allow God to create in me His perfect will? Does He possess my tongue? Is God able to use me as a mouth piece to spread His message of Truth?

Emotionally does God possess my whole being? Do I give Him my fears and trust Him? Does He possess the desire of my heart?

*I bring you into all that is mine*

Do I bring God into my spiritual life? My soul is eternal? Do I welcome God into my life on an eternal basis or just a temporary as needed basis? When I receive the Sacraments do I truly bring Christ, truly presence in the Sacraments into my life? Do I bring Him into my soul? Is the door of my heart open?

Do I bring God into my physically life? Do I bring God into my school? Do I bring God into my physically activities, which include everything? Do I bring God into my work, my family, my relationships?

Do I bring God into intellectual life? Do I bring God into my mind? Do I think about God and the things of God? Do I truly enter into the mysteries of the Faith?

Do I bring God into my creativity and communication? In all that I create and am asked to create at work, school, etc. do I bring God into my creations? Do I give God glory for the things we create? Do I bring God into my conversations? Do I share with others the truth of God?

Do I bring God into my emotions? When I express my feelings does God have a part in it? Do I bring God into situations that stress me out, that give me fear, that cause me to doubt?

*Give me your heart Mary.*

If you do not have the answers to these questions, it is time to enter the “school of the gift of self”. By entering the “school of the gift of self”, not only will you answer these and other questions, but in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary, you will learn to give the gift of your self to God.

## **PRAYER IN UNION WITH JESUS**

Lord Jesus, grant me the grace to empty myself and be filled with Your love, peace, patience, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and understanding. Let every beat of my heart and every breath that I breathe be for You. Let every word that I speak be reflective of you. Let every glance I give be a mirror of You. Let every hand I touch feel Your gentle care. Let every step I take be on your path toward Your Light. Let every word of praise I may receive be directed to You in humble thanksgiving. Let every angry word said to me or against me be returned with words of love and mercy not anger and revenge. Let every desire I have be for You. Let my will conform to yours. Touch every cell of my body, Lord, and make me the person, the servant, You want me to be. Amen.

*Prayer from the Order of the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts of Jesus and Mary*

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