



Human Sexuality

Sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage where it becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. The union of husband and wife achieves a two-fold end: 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 good of marriage and the future of the family.

God created the human person with intrinsic value and dignity. Thus we are never to be used by others as a means to an end, that is, as objects. The only way to respect another is to fully love him/her and work for what is best for that individual. No one should ever be used as an object for another's selfish desires.

God created sexuality and established the true meaning of sexual intercourse. He established a connection between the unitive and procreative powers of intercourse, that is, between the power of sexual intercourse to strengthen the bond of love between the husband and the wife and the power to create new life. God intends intercourse to be the most profound way men and women communicate love by seeking complete union (total self-giving) with one's spouse.

Abortion

Human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. From the first moment of existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person, among which is the inviolable right to life.

Abortion is the intentional killing of the unborn child, which violates that inalienable and most basic right to life, the foundation and condition for all other human rights. Abortion can never be used as a means of birth control. Some forms of contraception are in fact abortifacient.

Contraception

The gift of sex is also diminished by the use of contraceptives. God intends sexual intercourse to say, "I surrender myself to you totally and receive you totally." Contraception says, however, "There is some of me I don't want to give you or receive from you." This is so because one's fertility (ability to procreate), is withheld robbing sexual intercourse of its most unifying power. Contraception, therefore, suppresses the power of procreation, preventing complete and total self-giving between the husband and the wife. The use of contraceptives inhibits love, as the contracepting couple tells each other that they cannot love one another as they are. In addition, a contracepting couple is telling God that they do not accept the way God has created them and refuses to cooperate with God's plan for sexual activity. In this way, they work against their own desire for complete union with one another and God.



Homosexuality

What the Church teaches about homosexual conduct is brief and clear:

The purpose of the sexual faculty is the expression of married love and the generation of new life in the context of the family. God calls us to use our faculties for the purposes for which they have been given to us. To use the sexual faculty in a way which causes the generation of new life to be impossible is to misuse it and is wrong. Genital sexual behavior between two persons of the same sex is such a misuse and is therefore wrong.

Condition vs. Act

A True homosexual condition involves an exclusive or predominant attraction to persons of the same sex. Is such a condition sinful? To the extent that such a condition is not deliberately willed, it is not a sin. Still, the homosexual condition is considered a disorder since it is a strong tendency toward homosexual acts.

Homosexual acts involve genital activity with persons of the same sex. Deliberate homosexual activity is wrong because it misuses the sexual faculty; it is a sin when it is done knowingly and freely.

In view of every person's basic worth, the Church clearly teaches that those who experience homosexual inclinations should be treated with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Violence, hatred, and rejection directed toward persons is wrong and sinful.

The Church's ministry is to be an expression of God's love that excludes no one. This means that the Church calls such persons to chastity, just as she calls all of her members to practice chastity. By practicing this virtue, in conjunction with chaste friendships, prayer, and the frequent reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, those who struggle with homosexual inclinations can attain Christian perfection.

Infertility Support Group: In His Time

"In His Time is a new support group for Catholic couples who struggle with infertility. This group provides a supportive environment for Catholics who follow the Church's teaching on fertility and allows them to share their experiences with others who are on a similar journey. These meetings offer comfort, hope and peace to couples as they wait for God's plan to unfold in their lives. The group plans on the second Monday of every month." For more information, please [contact us](#).

Masturbation

The Church teaches that, objectively, masturbation is an intrinsically and seriously disordered act because the sexual activity is to be shared with one's spouse in the committed relationship of marriage, not as a solitary act. It frustrates the essential purpose of the sexual activity, namely, the strengthening of the marriage relationship and the procreation of children.

It may happen that for some persons masturbation becomes habitual behavior which interferes with one's personal, moral and spiritual growth, and, therefore, with their interpersonal relationships as well. The church teaches that such addictive behavior can lessen the person's freedom to choose his/her actions, and therefore, can lesson personal responsibility for individual action.

All persons do have the responsibility to attempt to control their sexual expression and come to psychosexual maturity. Thus a person must use those practical and spiritual aids (prayer, the Sacraments and spiritual direction) at his/her disposal.



Natural Family Planning

Though individual marriages are in most instances properly ordered to the raising of a family, there may be occasions when responsible parenting requires that spouses avoid pregnancy at this particular time. Natural Family Planning (NFP) is considered a moral means of following the teaching of the Church regarding birth regulation within marriage. It offers a lifestyle in which sexuality is respected and promoted in its true and fully human dimension (unitive and procreative), and in which a person is never used as an object. With NFP, the couple lives out God's plan for marriage and sexuality through a total self-giving, framed by dialogue, shared responsibility and self-control.

Natural Family Planning is a very effective means for planning one's family, for helping spouses achieve a pregnancy when they want or for helping them avoid a pregnancy when it would not be responsible to have a child at this time. NFP cooperates with our created nature, with God's design of our procreative potential.

Sexual Activity Outside of Marriage

Marriage is the only relationship in which sexual activity can possibly achieve the full meaning it is given by God: the faithful, exclusive and total gift of self to another in a way which is open to love and open to the creation of new life. The gift of sexual intercourse is diminished if it occurs outside of marriage, as the life-long commitment necessary to realize its true, God-given meaning is lacking and the use of a person as an object is clear. Marriage, then, is the only relationship in which the potential for this totally selfless, committed love exists.

Sterilization

Like the use of contraceptives, sterilization displays in an even more permanent fashion the deliberate intention to destroy the spouse's God-given gift of procreation. The Church has consistently and clearly taught that sterilization directly attacks a basic human good and degrades human sexuality by altering its values of being life giving and love giving or the gift of sexuality.

However, there may be medical procedures that result in infertility (permanent or otherwise) for the person. These circumstances (e.g. hysterectomies) are not in violation of human dignity since the deliberate intention is not to destroy one's fertility, but to secure human health. The infertility is understood as an unfortunate side effect, not the specific goal of one's intention. In such circumstances, the Church teaches that the person is not acting against human dignity.

References

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1994.
- *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI, 1968.
- *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*, Vatican City, 1986.
- *Twelve Tough Issues, What the Church Teaches – And Why*, Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, St. Anthony's Messenger, 1988.



Further Reading

For further information on what the Church teaches on the gift of Marriage and Human Sexuality:

Familiaris Consortio – Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II on the Role of the Christian Family and the Modern World.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html

Casti Connubii – Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian Marriage.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121930_casti-connubii_en.html

Humanae Vitae – Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Regulation of Birth.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121930_casti-connubii_en.html

Evangelium Vitae – John Paul II on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life.

http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0141/_INDEX.HTM

Between Man and Woman – Committee on Marriage and Family Life of the USCCB.

<http://www.usccb.org/flwy/manandwoman.htm>

Human Sexuality from God's Perspective – Humanae Vitae 25 Years Later – by the NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities.

<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/humanae25.htm>

A Basic Theology of Marriage – By Christopher West, based on Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

<http://www.christopherwest.com/article1.asp>