

Theology of the Body and Sexual Integrity

For Marriage Preparation & Married Couples

Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

"The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine."

St. John Paul II



*"I now am taking this kinswoman of mine,
not because of lust, but with sincerity" Tobit 8:7*

Dr. Dominic F. Dixon is a Psychologist and Author, having extensively researched in Psychology of Emotions, earned his doctorate in Counselling Psychology, and furthered research studies in Philosophy of Ethics at the University of Oxford | Religion at the University of Harvard, US | Bio-ethics at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University, US | Masters Certificate in Justice at the University of Harvard, US.

Dominic has been interviewed by CNN, NDTV, India Today, Times of India, Headlines Today, Khaleej Times, Yahoo, US Politics Today, Agence France Presse and other International News channels and projected in over 100 Provinces worldwide in regards to his work amongst the youth.

Dr. Dixon has presented a research paper on 'Homosexuality' to the Prime Minister of India and a research paper to the President of India on 'Youth Psychology & Sociology'. He has presented two papers at Oxford University on (1) Moral Absolutism (2) Can Utilitarianism respect rights?

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"Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race 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. **Tobit 8:5-9**

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<http://dominicedixon.net> | dom@dominicedixon.net

+91 7204012777/ 3777/ 4777

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING OUR BODY – Part 1	4
Our bodies proclaim a great mystery	5
CATECHISM of the integrality of the gift of self	7
UNDERSTANDING OUR BODY – PART	9
Language of the Body	10
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION - FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO	
The Church at the Service of the Family	15
UNDERSTANDING MARRIAGE – PART 1	
(Consortium Totius Vitae)	17
Marriage summary:	18
Catechism of the love of husband and wife	18
MARRIAGE as a Sacrament	21
Chastity in Marriage	21
CCC 2347: “Chastity is a promise of immortality”	21
UNDERSTANDING MARRIAGE – PART 2 (Married Love)	24
Conjugal Fidelity	24
Married Love: Humane Vitae, John Paul VI 11	26
The one flesh union is a great mystery	27
The mission in marriage	29
Of the unity and indissolubility of marriage	30
UNDERSTANDING CELIBACY	33
The Various forms of chastity	34
Offences against chastity	36
CALLED TO BE SAINTS OF THE MILLENNIUM	38
Catechesis of our Faith	41
EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:	43
The integrity of the person	43
The formation of conscience	45
Catechism of Conscience	46
UNDERSTANDING GRACE	48

UNDERSTANDING OUR BODY – Part 1

Catholic Doctrinal Principles:

“The question of human procreation, like every other question which touches human life, involves more than the limited aspects specific to such disciplines as biology, psychology, demography or sociology. It is the whole man and the whole mission to which he is called that must be considered: both its natural, earthly aspects and its supernatural, eternal aspects. And since in the attempt to justify artificial methods of birth control many appeal to the demands of married love or of responsible parenthood, these two important realities of married life must be accurately defined and analyzed. This is what we mean to do, with special reference to what the Second Vatican Council taught with the highest authority in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today.” JP VI, *Humane Vitae*, Paragraph 7.

The supreme dilemma and mystification in the world today is sex and sexuality. This is because we have been indoctrinated to gaze at our bodies as mere biological rather than theological. With this pseudo ideology, we become no less than swine.

Our bodies proclaim a great mystery.

Code of Canon Law 205: "Those baptized are in full communion with the Catholic Church here on earth who are joined with Christ in his visible body, through the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance."

1. Our bodies have the greatest meaning of love. This is the very purpose of the sexual relationship – to image the very love of Christ in the Church – The Holy Eucharist.
2. Nakedness without shame reveals the very sentiment of sexual desires as God created it to be. How? "This is my Body given for you" Christ was naked on the Cross, yet without shame.
3. In the spousal meaning of the body we discover that God's image ("love" and "gift") is "impressed in the body from the beginning" (TOB 13:2)
4. "Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church" How did Christ love the Church? By giving His Body.

"Only the nakedness that makes woman an object for man, or vice versa, is a source of shame. The fact that they were not ashamed means that the woman was not an "object" for the man, nor he for her." **John Paul II, February 20, 1980**

Original experiences before the fall: *Original nakedness* reveals that "spousal meaning of the body" which is the body's capacity of expressing divine love. Nakedness without shame demonstrates that man and woman experienced sexual desire as nothing but the desire to love as God loves – through the sincere gift of self. (ITH, P16)

Original sin: CCC 398: In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to "be like God", but "without God, before God, and not in accordance with God."

In Genesis Chapter 2 we read of the original innocence. Man and woman were innocent precisely because they were naked without shame. Man's body is intended to make complete the woman's body and vice versa. Neither man and man or woman and woman could exchange that love of the body. That would reveal nakedness with shame for man and man's body or woman and woman's body would not make sense because there is no representation of the Bride and the Groom, of Christ and the Church.

CCC 2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience

A man's body does not make sense by itself. Nor does a woman's. Seen in light of each other we discover the unmistakable plan of the Creator. – Male & Female.

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, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved."

CATECHISM of the integrality of the gift of self

Integrity of the Gift

The Gift refers to God's self-giving in creation. God initiates His self-gift by creating us in His image. We re-present that gift by living in the imae in which we're made.

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.

CCC 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.

We live in a culture of “friend in need, friend in deed” where many people who are friends, indulge in sexual relations. This is because we are in search of friendship with God and don't seem to find Him. The only way that we would find true friendship with God, is through the Holy Eucharist.

CCC 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, who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality.

Imagine touring Bannerghatta Zoo or any other zoo and seeing the variety of animals suddenly at seeing us, they run and hide themselves, feeling that they are naked. The tigers scooting for cover, the monkeys scaling up the trees and the fish hitting rock bottom. The above mentioned scenario would make us wonder: Why are human beings the only ones who feel shame?

UNDERSTANDING OUR BODY – PART 2

A deceptive appetite: Alaskan Eskimo cunningly attacks a wolf. Puts repeated coats of blood on the blade and leaves it to freeze, dug into the ground with the blade facing upwards. The wolf can smell temptation, the blood from a distance. The wolf comes and starts licking it and licking it aggressively and as it licks the sword, its tongue is sliced and the wolf cannot feel the cuts because its tongue has become numb with the cold. Now as the frozen blood is being licked off, warm blood of the wolf from the cuts on its own tongue is being applied on the sword. Getting more excited, the wolf keeps licking until it becomes weak with the loss of blood and it dies.

- Resembles the allure to sexual sin.
- Satisfaction without seeing the consequences
- For a while we feel like we're getting away
- Pleasure offers a temporary escape from loneliness
- But it only causes damage

Language of the Body:

The body has a language: It is the capacity of the body to speak its own language and to communicate without words.

Language of the body refers to the body's capacity to "speak" or "proclaim" God's love. It does so – or is meant to do so – most profoundly in the "one flesh" union of spouses. Here, spouses are meant to renew their marriage vows with their bodies.

CCC 1776 "Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment. . . . For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. . . . His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."

- The body can speak in the way we give someone a hug. Because our bodies can speak, it can also speak lies. For example when Judas kissed Jesus, Judas's body said one thing but his heart clearly said another.
- The body speaks the Truth when it speaks love. When you get married to the opposite gender,

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

you and your spouse's body will speak the language of love. Now when you try to speak the language of love before marriage with your boyfriend or girlfriend, then you speak lies and not love. And when you lie, there is consequence.

The freedom of our sexual gift is to bless and to be a blessing in reflection of Christ giving Himself to the Church. Therefore when we grab hold or possess the gift contrary to the precepts of Christ (Matt. 5:28), we extort the gift.

- Judas' body spoke a lie when he kissed Jesus. It was a kiss of betrayal. Because a kiss was to demonstrate love and affection, Paul instructed the people of Corinth and Rome to greet one another with a holy kiss, (cf Rom. 16:16/ 2 Cor.3:12) *In doing so, Paul championed the Church to speak the language of the body in Truth. For truth alone can set our bodies free from the lust of the flesh.*

Pornography is the counterfeit of love because there are no 'real' people and no real unions involved. The porn artistes are real people who are like any other actors who try to instill a feeling into you that is false and counterfeit. These porn artistes are speaking the language of lies through their acts.

A human being is not just made of a body, we also have souls and when we indulge in pornography, we're behaving like animals that don't have a life beyond the earth. Porn degrades every single person who watches it or who participates in it.

PORNOGRAPHY - A lie of the body: The sexually-explicit depiction of persons, in words or images, created in order to cause the arousal of lust on of the observer.

CCC 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.

Pornography separates the body from the soul. When we die, we are called as a 'body' and not by our names because we are no longer living. Porn is just that, it kills our innermost being. We die and we lose our relationship with God.

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

The true language of love is expressed on the Cross where Christ gave up His body – He was **bruised**, He was **beaten**. He **died** that you may **live**. The language that Christ' body spoke on the Cross, still echoes so powerfully, that we now speak it verbally and physically when we start and end every prayer. In the name of the Father...

REFLECTION & EXAMINATION OF YOUR BODY:

1. Can you think of a time when you were deceived by an empty promise?
2. Can you think of a time when you were deceived by another person's language of the body? What did you feel like after you realized you had been deceived? Have you ever done this to someone else?
3. What would motivate a person to tell a lie with his or her body?
4. Describe the time when someone told you the truth with the language of his or her body. How did this make you feel?

INTROSPECTION:

1. Identify five lies that your body speaks when you are attracted to that person.
2. Identify three lies that your body speaks, thought it is not sexual.

DUTIES FOR SPEAKING THE TRUTH:

1. Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)
2. Regular Holy Mass

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO

OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE EPISCOPATE TO THE CLERGY AND TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE WHOLE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN THE MODERN WORLD

The Church at the Service of the Family

The family in the modern world, as much as and perhaps more than any other institution, has been beset by the many profound and rapid changes that have affected society and culture. Many families are living this situation in fidelity to those *values that constitute the foundation of the institution of the family*. Others have become uncertain and bewildered over their role or even doubtful and almost unaware of the *ultimate meaning and truth of conjugal and family life*. Finally, there are others who are hindered by various situations of *injustice in the realization of their fundamental rights*.

Knowing that marriage and the family constitute one of the most precious of human values, the Church wishes to speak and offer her help to those who are already aware of the value of marriage and the family and seek to live it faithfully, to those who are uncertain and anxious and searching for

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

the truth, and to *those who are unjustly impeded from living freely their family lives*. Supporting the first, illuminating the second and assisting the others, the Church offers her services to every person who wonders about the destiny of marriage and the family. [1]

In a particular way the Church addresses the young, who are beginning their journey towards marriage and family life, for the purpose of presenting them with new horizons, helping them to discover the beauty and grandeur of the vocation to love and the service of life.

1, Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the modern world. *Gaudium et spes*, 50

UNDERSTANDING MARRIAGE – PART 1

(Consortium Totius Vitae) "consortium totius vitae" is "by its very nature ordered to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children."

Code of Canon Law 1055: "The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a **partnership of their whole life**, and which of its own very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has, between the baptized, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."

"For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes. All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole. By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown."

(Pope Paul VI , Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World - Second Vatican Council, Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family)

Sacred Language of Liturgy

The liturgical life of the Church is her celebration of the “great mystery” of Christ’s love for the Church primarily through prayer and the sacraments, especially the Mass. For spouses to live marriage as it was meant to be, they must allow their love to be taken up in the Church’s liturgy. Spousal love must become “liturgical.”

Marriage summary:

Christ says that in the resurrection we will not be given in marriage. This absence of marriage is explained not only by the end of history, but above all by the ultimate relationship of love between God and Man. This exchange will fulfill every hunger and ache for love and the union beyond our wildest imaginings.

Sexual differences reveals that we are created for eternal communion with the Eternal Communion: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. In the eschatological reality, the spousal meaning of the body will be lived through our glorified masculinity and femininity in union with God Himself, by seeing him “face to face.

Catechism of the love of husband and wife

CCC 2361 "Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

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."

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. (Tobit 8:4-9)

CCC 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.

CCC 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." 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. (Pius XII, Disclosure, 29 Oct. 1951)

CCC 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.

Marital Spirituality

It is the couple who are now one body, is opening that one body to the indwelling of the Spirit. So what they do in that love, not just in the marriage bed – loving as God loves. This comes only through the openness to the Spirit as we can't do this on our own.

MARRIAGE as a Sacrament:

The Gospel reveals that redemptive grace has been poured into the very depths of the human heart enabling men and women whatever their weaknesses and sins, to respond to the call to marriage just as it was instituted “in the beginning” as St. Paul exhorts in Ephesians 5. (ITH PG72)

The sacrament of marriage is “*an exhortation addressed to man, male and female, that they might consciently share in the redemption of the body.*” Historically man must find again the dignity and holiness of conjugal union ... on the basis of the mystery of redeemer (TOB 100:4,6)

Chastity in Marriage

CCC 2347: “Chastity is a promise of immortality”

Spouses “are called to chastity as ... life ‘according to the Spirit’” (TOB 191:4) “Thus, life ‘according to the Spirit’ expresses itself also in the reciprocal ‘union’ ... by which ... they become ‘one flesh’” (TOB 101:6)

- Chastity is the virtue that orients all of our sexual desires towards the truth of self giving love.
- We can only love sexually if we open ourselves to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

- We cannot say that we don't want God's love as part of our sexuality – God is love.
- If we keep God out of the bedroom, we are saying “keep love out of the bed.” This is precisely why we are so wounded and given to **concupiscence**.

“Christ ... opens marriage to the salvific action of God, to the powers flowing from the 'redemption of the body', which help to overcome the consequences of sin and to build the unity of man and woman according to the Creator's eternal plan” (TOB 100:2)

- The sacrament of marriage is immutable
- Marriage is an efficacious expression of love and is indissoluble
- Husband and wife conscientiously share in the redemption of the body

CCC 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.” 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. “What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

“Willed by God in the very act of creation, marriage and the family are interiorly ordained to fulfillment in Christ and have need of His graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin and restored to their “beginning,” that is, to full understanding and the full realization of God’s plan.”

At a moment of history in which the family is the object of numerous forces that seek to destroy it or in some way to deform it, and aware that the well-being of society and her own good are intimately tied to the good of the family, the Church perceives in a more urgent and compelling way her mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family, ensuring their full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society and of the People of God.” (Familiaris Consortio, John Paul II)

UNDERSTANDING MARRIAGE – PART 2 (Married Love)

John Paul II on the language of the Body and Marriage

“The sacramental sign of marriage is constituted by the fact that the words spoken by the newlyweds use again the same language of the body as the 'beginning,' and in any case they give a concrete and unique expression to it. They give it an intentional expression on the level of intellect and will, of consciousness and of the heart. The words 'I take you as my wife or as my husband ' imply precisely that perennial, unique, and unrepeatable language of the body.”

Conjugal Fidelity

CCC 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

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

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. (St. John Chrysostom, Hom. In Eph. 20, 8: PG 62, 146-147)

Married Love: Humane Vitae, John Paul VI

- “It is a love which is total—that very special form of personal friendship in which husband and wife generously share everything, allowing no unreasonable exceptions and not thinking solely of their own convenience. Whoever really loves his partner loves not only for what he receives, but loves that partner for the partner’s own sake, content to be able to enrich the other with the gift of himself.
- Married love is also faithful and exclusive of all other, and this until death. This is how husband and wife understood it on the day on which, fully aware of what they were doing, they freely vowed themselves to one another in marriage. Though this fidelity of husband and wife sometimes presents difficulties, no one has the right to assert that it is impossible; it is, on the contrary, always honorable and meritorious. The example of countless married couples proves not only that fidelity is in accord with the nature of marriage, but also that it is the source of profound and enduring happiness.”
- Finally, this love is fecund. It is not confined wholly to the loving interchange of husband and wife; it also contrives to go beyond this to bring new life into being. “Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the procreation and education of children. Children are really the supreme gift of

marriage and contribute in the highest degree to their parents' welfare." (Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today*, no. 50: AAS 58 (1966), 1070-1072 [TPS XI, 292-293]).

The one flesh union is a great mystery

Marital love and union is the original pattern that gives shape to the whole mystery of our redemption. (ITH)

All of the seven sacraments bear the mark of the "one and only sacrament" (98:3) of the beginning (marriage).

"Suppose that God wishes to fill you with honey; but if you are full of vinegar, where will you put the honey? The vessel, that is your heart, must first be enlarged and then cleansed, free from the vinegar and its taste. This requires hard work and is painful, but in this way alone do we become suited to that for which we are destined" (Pope Benedict XVI, SS 33)

CCC 1617: The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath.¹¹¹ which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist. Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign, the sacrament of the covenant of

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

Christ and the Church. Since it signifies and communicates grace, marriage between baptized persons is a true sacrament of the New Covenant.

CCC 1614: In his preaching Jesus unequivocally taught the original meaning of the union of man and woman as the Creator willed it from the beginning: permission given by Moses to divorce one's wife was a concession to the hardness of hearts. The matrimonial union of man and woman is indissoluble: God himself has determined it "what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

The Church struggles and mourns at the depression of annulments and divorces. One of the main reasons for such divorces is that many people have affairs before marriage and when that affair is broken and they marry someone else, the previous bond is not broken unless totally surrendered to God. The bond is even more stronger if the relationship has been sexual. They share themselves as husband and wife while not being consecrated in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Such break ups cause a deep anguish and rupturing of the soul that fills such individuals with the bitterness of vinegar. When marriage to another person happens, this bitterness is then passed over to the new relationship without resolve. This is how we victimize one another in the Church causing a break down of the domain of marriage.

The mission in marriage

There has been a long debate as to why should wives submit to their husbands. This is because society does not understand as God teaches. (ITH 66)

- Ephesians 5 does not justify male domination. Rather, it calls husbands to love their wives “as Christ loved the Church.” Christ came not to be served, but to serve.
- When understood in its proper context, “Wives, submit to your husbands” actually means “Wives, allow your husbands to serve you” (ITH 66)
- Wives put yourself under the MISSION of your husband. MISSION: Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church. (Eph 5:22)
- Submission is not domination but Redemption

CCC 1610: “ ...The law given to Moses aims at protecting the wife from arbitrary domination by the husband...”

Marriage is not only one of the seven sacraments, but a model of all of the sacraments. The goal of all of the sacraments is to unite the Bridegroom (Christ) and the Bride (the Church) and to fill the Church with divine life. (ITH)

Wives are the symbols of the Church!

Of the unity and indissolubility of marriage

It is very critical for us to understand why God made us male and female and called the two to become one flesh. We wrongly divide Christianity and sexuality. This is not authentic Christianity and authentic sexuality. They all come together in the Word made flesh.

“Couples electing to be married in the Catholic Church explicitly undertake an extra level of commitment above that undertaken in a Civil Marriage ceremony. Whereas the civil bond of marriage is legally dissoluble through divorce at the behest of either party, the Catholic sacrament of marriage if validly entered is explicitly indissoluble, i.e. exists as a lifelong partnership, entered into as a covenant whose duration is left to divine providence, with the promise "till death do us part" and the rule that "what God has joined together, man must not separate". (thus, a decree of nullity is not a divorce; it is a declaration that an invalidating factor prevented the purported marriage from being valid and binding)”. Catholic Doctrine on Marriage, Sacrament and Vocation, together.ie

During the talk with the Pharisees, who asked him the question about the indissolubility of marriage, Jesus Christ referred twice to the "beginning." The talk took place in the following way:

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

"And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?' He answered, 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.' They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?' He said to them, 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so'" (Mt 19:3ff., cf. also Mk 10:2ff.).

Christ did not accept the discussion at the level at which his interlocutors tried to introduce it. In a certain sense he did not approve of the dimension that they tried to give the problem. He avoided getting caught up in juridico-casuistical controversies. On the contrary, he referred twice to "the beginning." Acting in this way, he made a clear reference to the relative words in Genesis, which his interlocutors too knew by heart. From those words of the ancient revelation, Christ drew the conclusion and the talk ended.

Marriage – God’s loving design

Married love particularly reveals its true nature and nobility when we realize that it takes its origin from God, who "is love," the Father "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named."

Marriage, then, is far from being the effect of chance or the result of the blind evolution of natural forces. It is in reality the wise and provident institution of God the Creator, whose purpose was to effect in man His loving design. As a consequence, husband and wife, through that mutual gift of themselves, which is specific and exclusive to them alone, develop that union of two persons in which they perfect one another, cooperating with God in the generation and rearing of new lives.

The marriage of those who have been baptized is, in addition, invested with the dignity of a sacramental sign of grace, for it represents the union of Christ and His Church.

(Humane Vitae, JP VI, CH,8)

Understanding Celibacy

Celibacy summary:

St. John Chrysostom: "Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be particularly good. It is something better than what is admitted to be good that is the most excellent good."

Celibacy does not reject sexuality. It is a misconceived notion to think that celibacy is nullifying of one's sexuality. Those who are celibate, commune with God and their sexuality is expressed in the Holy Eucharist where they get the true meaning of sexuality – giving of one's self as a gift, in love. In the nuptial meaning of the body, we discover that our bodies reveal our calling to make a total gift of ourselves to God.

- All men and women who live in an authentic life of celibacy "for the kingdom" participate in a very particular way in the spousal relationship of Christ and Church. They also share in a very particular way in the superabundant fruitfulness of this relationship.
- The Virginal-marriage of Joseph and Mary embraces the Heavenly marriage and the

earthly marriage simultaneously. In turn, their virginal marriage literally effected the marriage of heaven and earth. In this way, Mary and Joseph became the first witnesses of a fruitfulness different from that of the flesh, that is the fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit

- Marriage and celibacy do not conflict. They're meant to explain or complete each other. Marriage reveals the spousal character of the celibacy vocation just as the celibate vocation reveals the sacramentality of marriage. Both lovers are "Spousal" in as much as they are expressed through the unreserved gift of oneself.
- Everything we have studied in TOB has its definite foundation in the mystery of the of the redemption of the body. The redemption of the body expresses itself not only in the final hope of the resurrection, but also in the hope of victory over sin in the here and now. This can be called "the hope of everyday." (ITH)

The various forms of chastity

CCC 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.¹²⁶ "Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

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."¹²⁷

CCC 2348 All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has "put on Christ,"¹³⁵ 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.

CCC 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."¹³⁶ 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.

Offences against chastity

CCC 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 unitive purposes.

CCC 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."¹³⁸ "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."

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.

CCC 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.

CCC 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.

SELF MASTERY:

Celibacy calls for self mastery. Self mastery means that I am in control of my desire. My desires are not in control of me. Self mastery is the true meaning of freedom. "Here we mean freedom above all as self-mastery (self-dominion)." Such freedom "is indispensable in order for man to be able to ... find himself fully' through a 'sincere gift of self' (GS, 24)" (TOB 15:2).

CCC 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."

CALLED TO BE SAINTS OF THE MILLENNIUM

St. Leo the Great: "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."
Sermo 22 in nat. Dom., 3:PL 54,192C. CCC 1691

Every-day mystic: Men and women who have caught the "fire" that Christ came to cast on the earth. Through all of life's joys and trials, the every-day mystic senses God's loving plan unfolding and abandons himself or herself to it with loving trust.

Jesus made his own the call to holiness already addressed by God to the people of the old covenant: "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy (Lev 19:2)". He repeated it continually by word and by the example of his life. Especially in the Sermon on the Mount he left to the Church a code of Christian holiness. The history of Christian holiness is the proof that by living in the spirit of the Beatitudes proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. Mt 5:3-12), Christ's exhortation in the parable of the vine and the branches is realized: "Abide in me, and I in you.... He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit" (Jn 15:4, 5). These words are

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

verified in many ways in the lives of individual Christians, thereby showing, down the centuries, the manifold riches and beauty of the holiness of the Church. (*Thomas Rosica, csb*)

John Paul II for World Youth Day 2000 in Rome:
“Young people of every continent, do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium! Be contemplative, love prayer; be coherent with your faith and generous in the service of your brothers and sisters, be active members of the Church and builders of peace. To succeed in this demanding project of life, continue to listen to His Word, draw strength from the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance. The Lord wants you to be intrepid apostles of his Gospel and builders of a new humanity”.

“Just as salt gives flavor to food and light illumines the darkness, so too holiness gives full meaning to life and makes it reflect God’s glory. How many saints, especially young saints, can we count in the Church’s history! In their love for God their heroic virtues shone before the world, and so they became models of life which the Church has held up for imitation by all.... Through the intercession of this great host of witnesses, may God make you too, dear young people, the saints of the third millennium!” (Holiness and saints in *The Way of the Cross* on Good Friday in his Private Chapel (25 March 2005))

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

2005 World Youth Day in Cologne – an event he would not live to see, Pope John Paul II sent a letter to the young people of the world: “Dear young people, the Church needs genuine witnesses for the new evangelization: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others. The Church needs saints. All are called to holiness, and holy people alone can renew humanity. Many have gone before us along this path of Gospel heroism, and I urge you to turn often to them to pray for their intercession.”

Catechesis of our Faith

CCC 1691: "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."

CCC 1695: "Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God," "sanctified . . . [and] called to be saints," Christians have become the temple of the Holy Spirit. This "Spirit of the Son" teaches them to pray to the Father and, having become their life, prompts them to act so as to bear "the fruit of the Spirit" by charity in action. Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation. He enlightens and strengthens us to live as "children of light" through "all that is good and right and true."

CCC 1697: Catechesis has to reveal in all clarity the joy and the demands of the way of Christ.²² Catechesis for the "newness of life" in him should be:

- a catechesis of the Holy Spirit, the interior Master of life according to Christ, a gentle guest and friend who inspires, guides, corrects, and strengthens this life;

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

- a catechesis of grace, for it is by grace that we are saved and again it is by grace that our works can bear fruit for eternal life;
- a catechesis of the beatitudes, for the way of Christ is summed up in the beatitudes, the only path that leads to the eternal beatitude for which the human heart longs;
- a catechesis of sin and forgiveness, for unless man acknowledges that he is a sinner he cannot know the truth about himself, which is a condition for acting justly; and without the offer of forgiveness he would not be able to bear this truth;
- a catechesis of the human virtues which causes one to grasp the beauty and attraction of right dispositions towards goodness;
- a catechesis of the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity, generously inspired by the example of the saints;
- a catechesis of the twofold commandment of charity set forth in the Decalogue;
- an ecclesial catechesis, for it is through the manifold exchanges of "spiritual goods" in the "communion of saints" that Christian life can grow, develop, and be communicated.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE:

The integrity of the person

CCC #1779: It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience. This requirement of interiority is all the more necessary as life often distracts us from any reflection, self-examination or introspection:

Return to your conscience, question it.
. . . Turn inward, brethren, and in everything you do, see God as your witness.

“**Conscience**” is derived from the Greek **συνειδήσει** “Suneidesis”. Suneidesis is made up of two words: sun, meaning with, and oida, to know. Hence, a co-knowledge.

Conscience therefore is “literally, ‘a knowing with’ (sun, ‘with,’ oida, ‘to know’), i.e., ‘a co-knowledge (with oneself), the witness borne to one’s conduct by conscience, that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God, as that which is designed to govern our lives;’ hence (a) the sense of guiltiness before God; Heb. 10:2; (b) that process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad, and so prompting to do the former, and avoid the latter; Rom. 2:15 (bearing

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

witness with God's law); Heb. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; acting in a certain way because 'conscience' requires it, Rom. 13:5; so as not to cause scruples of 'conscience' in another, 1 Cor. 10:28,29... (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

Ignatius Loyola stated that "Examination of conscience is the single most important spiritual exercise" Examination of Conscience is by far the most important spiritual exercise for a Christian from the time he rises to the time he rests. Examination of conscience is in retrospect, reflecting on our words and actions in conformity to the word of God. St. Bernard taught: "As a searching investigator of the integrity of your own conduct, submit your life to a daily examination. Consider carefully what progress you have made or what ground you have lost. Strive to know yourself. Place all your faults before your eyes. Come face to face with yourself, as though you were another person, and then weep for your faults."

If you want to walk with God, you must examine your conscience daily and throughout the day. When we are complacent or lazy, our conscience also takes rest. When our conscience takes rest, our moral fire wall is turned off and the enemy enters with distorted thoughts intruding our minds.

Examination of conscience needs to have a standard by which we gauge what is right and wrong in accordance to the moral law of God, and thus we could discern on our conscience. That

standard is the written Word of God and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The formation of conscience

CCC 1783: Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings.

CCC 1784: The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. The education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart.

CCC 1785: In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path,⁵⁴ we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord's Cross. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of

others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church.

Pope Benedict XVI on formation of moral conscience: In the Christian tradition, "conscience", "conscientia", means "with knowledge": that is, ourselves, our being is open and can listen to the voice of being itself, the voice of God. Thus, the voice of the great values is engraved in our being and the greatness of the human being is precisely that he is not closed in on himself, he is not reduced to the material, something quantifiable, but possesses an inner openness to the essentials and has the possibility of listening. In the depths of our being, not only can we listen to the needs of the moment, to material needs, but we can also hear the voice of the Creator himself and thus discern what is good and what is bad. Of course, this capacity for listening must be taught and encouraged.

Catechism of Conscience

CCC 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.¹²⁵

CCC 2340: Whoever wants to remain faithful to his baptismal promises and resist temptations will want to adopt the means for doing so: self-knowledge,

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

practice of an asceticism (self discipline) 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."¹²⁸

CCC 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.

CCC 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.¹²⁹ The effort required can be more intense in certain periods, such as when the personality is being formed during childhood and adolescence.

CCC 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."¹³⁰

CCC 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."¹³¹ 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.

CCC 2345: Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort. The Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ.

UNDERSTANDING GRACE:

- Originally, man and woman were innocent and were under the grace of God's Fatherhood. And Scripture proves that man and woman were "innocent" – precisely because they were naked without shame. Being innocent without shame is holiness.
- Man and woman were "holistic" at the beginning, meaning that holiness was an interdependent aspect of their very nature.
- After the fall, we have disembodied holiness and we need to race back to retrieve it.
- "If creation is a gift given to man ... then *its fullness* and deepest dimension is *determined by grace.*" And grace is non other than man's "participation in the inner life of God Himself, in His holiness" (TOB 16:3)

Theology of the Body & Sexual Integrity
Dr. Dominic F. Dixon

- Holiness “is measured according to the ‘great mystery’ in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom” (JP II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 27)
- Holiness is not first something we do. It's what we allow to be done to us by God.
- The first step to holiness is surrender. And in that surrender we allow God to dilate us and to remove that vinegar and then replace it with honey. This process is very, very painful because it requires God to stretch our shrunken hearts.

This research study is dedicated
to my spiritual hero.

St. John Paul II

POPE
JOHN
PAUL
II
THE GREAT

18TH MAY 1920 - 2ND APRIL 2005

TRUE
SERVANT OF
GOD

