
Prayer Experience

Have the students read and prayerfully reflect upon the following passage taken from Ephesians 5:25:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her.

IV. Abuses of the Gift of Sexuality

A. Lack of Respect for Ourselves and Others

We human beings do not always use the gift of sexuality as God intended. Lack of respect for the dignity of the human person leads to wrong attitudes toward sexuality, which in turn lead to abuses of sexuality. Some abuses are:

- using our sexuality to manipulate other people for our own purposes or pleasure;
- failing to treat others as persons, and, instead, treating them as objects;
- trying to pressure others into doing things that are against their conscience;
- disregarding the consequences of our actions; and
- failing to respect ourselves as persons, and so allowing others to treat us as objects.

357, 1849-50, 1865

The most obvious cases of this lack of respect for the dignity of the human person are pornography, prostitution, and rape.

- Both pornography and prostitution treat human beings as things, and exploit their sexuality for profit. Through these actions God's gift of sexuality is completely debased. 2354-55
- Rape is an act of violence that gravely injures the respect, the freedom and the physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right. It is always intrinsically evil. 2356

Christians must do all they can to foster respect for the human person.

This includes rejecting and combating:

- everything that mocks or degrades women, 2352, 2334, 2336
- everything that mocks or degrades men, 2352, 2334, 2336
- the abuse of children and youth, including sexual abuse, and
2389, 2356
- any exploitation of sex for pleasure, profit or power. 2351-55

Prayer Experience

Discuss what it means to manipulate and use other people.
Have the students give examples of ways in which someone "uses" another sexually and calls it "love."

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Pray to the Holy Spirit with the students, asking that when we are tempted to abuse the gift of our sexuality, we will remember the presence of Jesus' Spirit within us.

B. Misuses of Sexual Activity

God has given the human race a basic need and capacity to give and receive love. Our experience of love helps us develop a sense of self-esteem and reduces our sense of loneliness. 2331, 1609

Sometimes people use sexual activity as a substitute for a basic communication of love, or to make themselves feel important, powerful or needed. Sexual activity does not, however, solve underlying problems of loneliness and self-esteem. 2351, 1606-07

When sexual activity is experienced outside of marriage, it is fundamentally dishonest, because we are implying by our actions that we have made a life commitment, when, in fact, we have not. We find ourselves feeling manipulative or used, as lonely and as empty as ever. 2348, 2337, 2390

Sexual activity outside of marriage is morally wrong. 2337-38, 2350, 2353

- Premarital intercourse (fornication) denies the public commitment of total self-giving which is the necessary context for sexual intercourse. It thus devalues the gift of one person to another and degrades them both. 2353, 2390-91