

ARTICLE 6  
THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not commit adultery.<sup>112</sup>

You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.<sup>113</sup>

369-373 I. "MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.."

2331 "God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image . . . God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the *vocation*, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion."<sup>114</sup>  
1604

"God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them";<sup>115</sup> He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply"<sup>116</sup> "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created."<sup>117</sup>

2332 *Sexuality* affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.  
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2333 Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity*. Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.  
1603

2334 "In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity."<sup>118</sup> "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God."<sup>119</sup>  
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2335 Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."<sup>120</sup> All human generations proceed from this union.<sup>121</sup>  
2205

2336 Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins. In the Sermon on the Mount, he interprets God's plan strictly: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."<sup>122</sup> What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.<sup>123</sup>  
1614

The tradition of the Church has understood the sixth commandment as encompassing the whole of human sexuality.

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112 Ex 20:14; Deut 5:18.                      117 Gen 5:1-2.                                      122 Mt 5:27-28.  
113 Mt 5:27-28.                                    118 FC 22; cf. GS 49 § 2.                      123 Cf. Mt 19:6.  
114 FC 11.    119 MD 6.  
115 Gen 1:27.                                        120 Gen 2'24.  
116 Gen 1:28.                                        121 Cf. Gen 4:1-2, 25-26; 5:1

## II. THE VOCATION TO CHASTITY

2520 **2337** Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.

The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift.

### The integrity of the person

**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.<sup>124</sup>

1767 **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.<sup>125</sup> "Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of 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."<sup>126</sup>

2015 **2340** Whoever wants to remain faithful to his baptismal promises and resist temptations will want to adopt the *means* for doing so: self-knowledge, practice of an asceticism 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."<sup>127</sup>

1809 **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.

409 **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.<sup>128</sup> The effort required can be more intense in certain periods, such as when the personality is being formed during childhood and adolescence.

2223 **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."<sup>129</sup>

2525 **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."<sup>130</sup> 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.

**2345** Chastity is a moral virtue. It is also a gift from God, a *grace*, a fruit of spiritual effort.<sup>131</sup> The Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ.<sup>132</sup>

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124 Cf. *Mt* 5:37.

125 Cf. *Sir* 1:22.

126 *GS* 17.

127 St. Augustine, *Conf.* 10, 29, 40: PL 32, 796.

128 Cf. *Titus* 2:1-6.

129 *FC* 34.

130 *GS* 25 §1.

131 Cf. *Gal* 5:22.

132 Cf. *1 Jn* 3:3.

## The various forms of chastity

**2348** All the baptized are called to chastity. The Christian has "put on Christ,"<sup>134</sup> 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.

- 1620 **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."<sup>135</sup> 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.<sup>136</sup>

- 1632 **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.

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133 Cf. Jn 15:15.

134 *Gal* 3:27.

135 CDF, *Persona humana* 11.

136 St. Ambrose, *De viduis* 4, 23: PL 16, 255A.

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