



## The positive meaning of Christian chastity

In marriage, chastity helps love, opposing only egoistic pleasure that prevents love from reaching its entire human dimension.

Chastity is founded in absolute love because it involves openness to the divine love that tells us that we are more than sex. Chastity purifies and sanctifies the human being in his entire person, including deeper layers of its personality. But the original sin makes the sexual performance, which, by its very nature, is an act of personal union, easily become selfish. As insensitivity is also selfish, to cultivate chastity we must cultivate charity, i.e. the love of its supernatural dimension. But this is a gift of the grace of God, so we cannot achieve this with our strength, but it is God who gives it to us if we do not oppose and collaborate with Him by the obedience to the divine commandments, the practice of the moral virtues and the fidelity to prayer.

The reason is clear: the Christian life requires loving God and the neighbor (Mc 12, 28-34; Mt 22, 34-40) and the great struggle of our life is the fight between our generosity and our selfishness, being, therefore, a rejection of the grace and a manifestation of selfishness and existential failure, since man is faced to a problem that is always the same: how to overcome loneliness and achieve the union with others. Love is not renounceable for anyone who wants to reach its fullness. Therefore morality regulates the use of sex in the double dimension of personal growth and interpersonal relationships, not staying at the mere scope of the permissible or prohibited, but telling us which are the rules of conduct that construct the personality and without them, the sexual instinct leads to anti-social and irrational actions.

Chastity is not ignorance. Moreover, this is a danger, because it does not protect or prepare for problems that arise. In chastity education, it is necessary to highlight the values that are enclosed in the marriage and virginity. What is required is a progressive initiation, which puts before the eyes the spiritual and moral values. Who has grown to love the neighbor and himself relying on the love and grace of God, is hardly left blind and degraded by instinct. It is certainly clear that simple instinct is radically inadequate to regulate ethical behavior when human sexuality is not governed by an automatic behavior.

The human being is free, but must also learn how to be free, because the responsibility is only gradually acquired. The sexual language must be learned gradually, without dramatizing childhood or adolescence imperfections or errors, to assume sexuality to put it at the service of the interpersonal relationship and human maturity. Thus, Christian chastity means not only the domain of the instinct but also an attitude of religious respect to sexuality, being its purpose no other than sanctity. (Rom 6.19; 2 Cor 7.1; 5.3 EF)

The positive sense of chastity should be proposed to everyone, but especially to adolescents so that they do not see in premarital chastity something that diminishes the personality or does not recognize the deep desires of man. In marriage, chastity helps love, opposing only to the selfish pleasure that prevents love from reaching its entire human dimension, i.e. a spiritual, free and generous love towards the other person, which has its maximum expression in the conjugal sex act, the physical union of a man and a woman who are husband and wife, who love each other and put their bodies in the service of the other. In this act, chastity takes sexual pleasure as an ethically positive mode, making it available for the love and generosity, with a loyal, stable, permanent and fruitful union. Who does not understand these basic truths should not get married, because without chastity there is no true maturity or conjugal love.

The same can be said of the priest or religious life chastity, which should be based on a generous love which implies dialogue and a spiritual relationship with God, the Virgin, and others.

Chastity tries to get to the full integration of the instincts and sexual desires in the harmonic construction of the person. This construction is not only in the individual dimension because our life has, as we know, a social structure and is through interpersonal relationships that we will succeed in reaching full maturity.

