

For Grades 7-12

See Guidelines for teaching
the virtue of chastity
on page 7a.



St. Maria Goretti in Heaven giving
Alessandro 14 white lilies for the 14 times
that he stabbed her. (See page 2)
Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe
La Crosse, WI
Artist: Noah Buchanan

St. Maria Goretti
1890-1902

Sacred Scripture:

“Do you not know that your
body is a temple of the
Holy Spirit within you,
which you have from God?
You are not your own; you
were bought with a price.
So glorify God
in your body.”
1Corinthians 6:18-20

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH

Chastity

Catechism of the Catholic Church: (cf. CCC 2337, 2339)

Chastity integrates the passions of the body with our ability to reason and to choose the good. Living the virtue of chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person. (See page 5 for definitions) Chastity involves man's inner unity of belonging to the bodily world (that is the physical body) and the spiritual world (referring to our relationship with God and others) and is expressed with love and respect in the relationship of one person to another. Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is 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. Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of a properly-formed conscience and free choice, and to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

What is the Virtue of Chastity?

Chastity is the virtue that allows us to do what is right, good and loving in the area of sexuality and relationships by controlling our sexual desires. God gave us our sexual desire, which is a sacred gift reserved for the sacramental union of husband and wife and the procreation of children. Chastity is protective as sexuality can become disordered and misdirected toward lust: lust involves any disordered thoughts or desires - which may or may not lead to action - that violates purity. The sinister effect of the violation of chastity includes not only the possibility of the abuse of another person but always the degradation of one's own personal dignity.

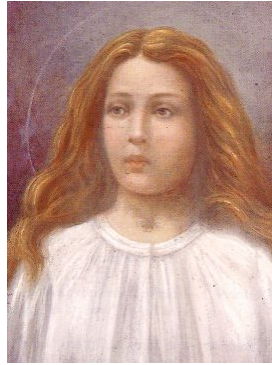
- Chastity is also a gift from God, a grace, a fruit of spiritual effort. The practice of chastity is about permeating the passions and appetites of the senses with right reason so that an individual will be treated as a person to be loved through proper respect rather than as a thing to be used.
- Chastity is not a matter of repression of sexual feelings and temptations, but the integration of the gift of sexuality. To integrate this gift of sexuality means to make sexual feelings and temptations subordinate to love and respect. This means that the gift of physical, spousal union is reserved for marriage alone. Integration is also preserved when a person foregoes physical, spousal union for the sake of the total, willing gift of self to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.
- Before puberty children need to be formed in the virtue of temperance. Training in chastity includes self-discipline demonstrated with modest behavior, protection of the senses, fidelity to prayer, reception of the Sacraments and wise guidance. This process of self-mastery is life-long.

Why do we need the Virtue of Chastity?

- The practice of chastity is necessary due to the effects of Original Sin.(6a)
- Unchastity or lust causes spiritual closing of the mind, rashness, thoughtlessness, diminished fidelity, inordinate self-love, hatred of God, excessive love of this world, and abhorrence or despair of a future world.
- Chastity allows us to use the gift of sexuality the way God intended it to be, protecting it from selfish exploitation. A chaste person becomes free to fulfill the law of love totally and selflessly within a lifelong vocation.

Chastity

Saint Maria Goretti



Also Known As:

Patron of chastity
Patron of youth
Patron of teenage girls
Patron of poverty
Patron of purity
Patron of forgiveness
Youngest saint

Feast Day:

July 6

From Maria's story
innocent children and young
people with their zest for life
can learn how not to be led
astray by disordered and
attractive pleasures which are
not only short-lived and empty
but also sinful. Instead they
can fix their sights on
achieving Christian moral
perfection which brings joy
and peace, however difficult
that course may prove.

from a homily
by **Pope Pius XII**
at the canonization of
Saint Maria Goretti



Statue: St. Maria Goretti Church,
Madison, WI

Her Life

- Maria was born in 1890. Her parents were very poor farmers, but had great love for God, Our Lady and each other. The family lived in eastern Italy.
- Her parents along with Maria, her 2 sisters and 3 brothers moved to Ferriere, Italy, with the hope of improving their financial condition. Maria's father, a hardworking, humble man, struck a deal with Signor Serenelli to be a tenant farmer, to work together and live in the same building with him and his son.
- At the age of 9, Maria's father died of malaria. While her mother, brothers and one sister worked in the farm fields, Maria took care of the household chores and cared for her youngest sister, with dedication and cheerfulness.
- Although Maria and her brothers and sisters remained illiterate, they were well-schooled in their faith. Maria had a deep understanding of who she was as a child of God, with a keen sense of her personal dignity and self-worth. This understanding would prepare her to choose to preserve her innocence from which she derived a joyful and peaceful life with her family. Maria grew in prayer as she prepared to receive Jesus in First Communion.
- Signor Serenelli's son, Alesandro, harassed Maria to perform difficult chores and to satisfy his impure thoughts. Although Maria refused to submit to Alessandro, he persisted. One day as Maria was sewing and watching her younger sister, Alesandro dragged her into the house and attempted to force her into sinful acts against chastity. Maria fought with all her strength to resist Alessandro and with great courage she warned him that this sin would condemn him to hell. Alessandro stabbed Maria 14 times and left her to die.
- Maria was treated in the local hospital but died 20 hours after Alessandro's attack. She was 11 years old. Before she died, Maria forgave Alessandro with all her heart and stated that she hoped that he would join her in Heaven.
- While in prison, Maria appeared to Alessandro in a dream. She held out to him fourteen white lilies representing the fourteen times that he stabbed her, causing him to change from desperation to repentance and conversion.

How is Saint Maria Goretti a Model of Chastity?

- Saint Maria Goretti was modest in her dress and was consciously pure in her behavior. She practiced virtue throughout her life and resisted Alessandro's obscene jokes and shameful advances to submit to his sinful desires.
- Maria did keep silent, realizing that exposing Alessandro would bring worry and grief to her mother and total financial ruin to the family. Maria took every precaution to avoid being near Alessandro alone, reminded him to obey the Commandments and told him that he would go to hell for this sin.
- Maria was a person of integrity: her actions were guided by her heart which sought to do the will of God, in this case to protect her self-worth.

Activities to foster the growth of the Virtue of Chastity

- Pray this prayer for the grace to grow in the virtue of chastity. (Adapted from St. Thomas Aquinas).
Dearest Jesus! Without the help of Your grace, I cannot prevail. Therefore, I pray that You defend, with Your grace, the gift of chastity and purity in my soul as well as my body. And if I have ever received through my senses any impression that could stain my chastity and purity, I ask You, Who are the supreme Lord of all my powers, to take it from me, so that I may with a clean heart advance in Your love and service, offering myself chaste all the days of my life. Amen.
- Make a list of the words from page one that describes the virtue of chastity.
- Discuss the effects of Original Sin that occurred with the fall of Adam and Eve. (See page 6a)
- Why does each human person need to practice the virtue of chastity? Why does the virtue of chastity require interior work that is life-long, and sometimes very difficult but well worth the price? What are the benefits of living the virtue of chastity? (6a, 6b, 6c, handout on “Why Chastity”)
- Discuss the process of developing the virtue of chastity. What do we need to avoid in order to keep our minds and hearts pure and our bodies chaste? How does our choice of music, TV, movies, reading material, and games influence our attempt to remain chaste? (See page 7b)
- What does it mean to cooperate with God’s grace in order to avoid situations that lead us to sin? “Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to His call.” When we desire God, not resisting Him, we are cooperating with Him – with the power of the Holy Spirit. Cooperating with God’s grace enables us to do what we cannot do on our own. (CCC 1196-2005)
- What is God’s Plan for authentic love? (see “Why Chastity”) Why did God command us to exclude the exercise of sex outside of sacramental marriage? Why do we need God’s grace to live a chaste life?
- What does the virtue of chastity have to do with overcoming selfishness? How does chastity ensure and confirm the dignity of each person? How does fornication and adultery act against the proper respect owed to a person? (6a, 6b, 6c, 7b, 7c)
- Discuss the Commandments that call us to live the virtue of chastity. (CCC 2514-2527, 2380-2381)
- How does abstinence before marriage and complete fidelity during marriage free us from so much confusion, pressure, and compulsiveness, which may lead to addiction and misery? (7c)
True or false: A couple who is living a truly sacramental marriage enjoying the marital union is leading a chaste life. Discuss the various forms of chastity. (See CCC 2348-2350)
- What are the life-time repercussions for not living the virtue of chastity?
- How does the Sacrament of Penance assist us to live a chaste life and heal the wounds of sin?
- What is meant by custody of the eyes? When should it be practiced? Background info: There is a saying, “As long as I ‘just look’ and not give in to the temptation, I am okay.” Why is this thinking erroneous? An analogy can be helpful. How close can I get to a can of gasoline with a match before it is ignited? We would never want to take the chance. Passions left uncontrolled, beyond a certain point, will lead the person submitting to something previously protected. Similarly, if we give the devil an inch, he will take a mile. In other words, a seemingly minor concession to unchaste thoughts will typically snowball out of control and, if not rejected, will flow into serious sin.
- How can you change unhealthy, “borderline” patterns in your life to avoid sins against chastity? Do you see the value in planning ahead? What does it mean to be an integrated person? (See 7e, CCC 2338)

Additional Information on the Virtue of Chastity

The following definitions and descriptions are gleaned from these Church documents:
The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality (TM)*,
On The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (CF)

- **5a) Human sexuality** is a fundamental component of each person, making each male or female, ordered to the giving and receiving of love and to the procreation of children. “Human sexuality ‘. . . male and female He created them. . .’ is part of that created gift which God saw as being “very good” (Genesis 1:27) (TM #11). “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” (CCC #2332).
The sexuality of male and female makes its mark not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual level. Insofar as it is a way of relating and being open to others, sexuality has love as its intrinsic end, more precisely, love as donation and acceptance, love as giving and receiving (TM #11). Therefore, sexuality on the physical level has its own truth and reaches its full meaning when it expresses the personal giving of husband and wife in the Sacrament of Matrimony. “The revealing sign of authentic married love is openness to life” (TM #15).
“Virginal and married love are the two forms in which the person’s call to love is fulfilled. In order for both to develop, they require the commitment to live chastity, in conformity with each person’s own state of life” (TM #16). “Insofar as it entails sincere self-giving, it is obvious that growth in love is helped by that discipline of the feelings, passions, and emotions which leads us to self-mastery” (TM #16).
- **5b) Sex is what makes a person either male or female.** The most authentic understanding of the term “sex” is the understanding that our “sex” is either male or female. The contemporary term for this understanding of “sex” is “gender”. It is from being male or female that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman.
In today’s culture, having sex is often used to mean sexual activity either within or outside of marriage. It can imply something much less than the dignified, sacred and holy physical union – the total gift of self - that is the physical expression of the spiritual union which takes place within the Sacrament of Marriage. In order to distinguish the difference between what is dignified and holy, physical union and what is not, all are to refer to married genital activity as sexual intercourse, the marital embrace, one flesh union, or conjugal love, as these terms more fully express the total giving of a husband and wife to each other.
- **5c) Human love** means “to will the good of another” (CCC #1766). All love is a God-given gift and meant to be truly ordered and authentic, experienced within the supernatural gift known as charity. “When love is lived out in marriage, it includes and surpasses friendship. Love between a man and a woman is achieved when they give themselves totally. . . . To this married love, and to this love alone, belongs sexual giving, ‘realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death’” (TM 14).
- **5d) Lust** is a disordered and sinful desire for sexual pleasure. A person who lusts seeks inordinate sexual satisfaction from his own body or another person’s body. The totality of the person is ignored. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself as it is isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes. Lust is contrary to authentic love as it is directed to satisfying *first and foremost* the one who is seeking the pleasure. Within a lustful state, a full gift of self (body, mind, spirit) does not occur. A person with lustful thoughts/desires uses another person as an object of pleasure rather than treating him/her as a person to be loved. Lust is the opposite of love as it denies respect.

- **6a) Before Original Sin**, we had the gifts of
 - Original Holiness, including:
 - Sanctifying grace in the soul, which is a participation in God’s life and His friendship
 - Unity and familiarity with God in the Garden
 - Complete trust in God
 - Original Justice, including:
 - Harmony within oneself: The human person is composed of soul and body. The soul includes the mind, will, and emotions. Harmony is the soul and body are united in choosing the good.
 - Harmony between Adam and Eve
 - Harmony with creation

After the Original Sin, we lost

 - Original Holiness, including:
 - Sanctifying grace in the soul, which meant the death of the soul
 - Separation from God, with a loss of complete trust in Him. We became afraid of God.
 - Original Justice, including:
 - Disharmony, the soul and body of the human person are no longer united in choosing the good.
 - Disharmony in relations between people
 - Disharmony with creation as animals became afraid of humans
 - The results:
 - Human nature is weakened and inclined toward sin (concupiscence)
 - Human persons are subject to ignorance, suffering, and death
 - Man and woman can be tempted to use each other as an object for sexual pleasure (lust)
- **6b)** Due to the effects of original sin, it takes conscious choices and effort to live a chaste life. Chastity is acquired through continuous cooperation with the Holy Spirit, receiving God’s strength through the Sacraments of Confession, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist along with daily prayer. Chastity, over a period of time, is impossible without prayer and the grace of the Sacraments! All persons are called to chastity: within the married state, within the single state, and within the celibate state. (See *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, n. 8-25)
Formation in the virtue of chastity includes:
 1. Education for authentic love
 2. Understanding of one’s sexuality as a gift
 3. Cultivation of all the virtues, especially temperance and charity
 4. The practice of daily prayer
 5. Respect for human dignity and self-worth in oneself and in others
 6. The practice of decency and modesty in behavior, dress, speech, and the practice of custody of the eyes and all the senses. Custody here implies a careful guarding to keep from sin.
 7. Respect for one’s own body and for others as temples of the Holy Spirit (1Corinthians 6:19)
 8. Assistance in acquiring self-mastery and self-control
- **6c)** The benefits of living the virtue of chastity include:
 1. The gift of authentic friendship (CCC 2347)
 2. The integrity of life and love appreciated within oneself and others (CCC 2348-2340)
 3. Fidelity in marriage which leads to strong family life (CCC 2363)
 4. Avoidance of the occasion of sin and the ability to be “pure of heart” (CCC 2518)
 5. Development to authentic maturity (*On the Role of the Family* – hereafter FC – n. 37)
 6. A lifestyle that brings joy (*The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* – TM – n. 3)
 7. The discipline to renounce self, to make sacrifices, and to wait. (TM n. 5)
 8. A life that revolves around self-giving love, compassion, generosity, patience(TM n. 16, 31)
 9. Development of a harmonious personality and freedom from self-centeredness (TM n. 17)
 10. True self-respect is developed and makes one capable of respecting others. (TM 17)

- **7a) *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, Guidelines for Education within the Family, The Pontifical Council for the Family***

The booklet can be downloaded at www.vatican.va / Click on English / Type in name of doc in Search

Parents: Four Principles Regarding Information about Sexuality, paragraphs 65-76

1. Each child is a unique and unrepeatable person and must receive individualized formation.
2. The moral dimension of God's plan for love must always be part of their explanations.
3. Formation in chastity and timely information regarding human sexuality must be provided in the broadest context of education for love.
4. Parents should provide this information with great delicacy, but clearly and at the appropriate time.

Parents & Educators: Four Working Principles and Their Particular Norms, paragraphs 121-127

1. Human sexuality is a sacred mystery and must be presented according to the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Church, always bearing in mind the effects of original sin.
2. Only information proportionate to each phase of their individual development should be presented to children and young people.
3. No material of an erotic nature should be presented to children or young people of any age, individually or in a group. The instruction is to be "positive and prudent" and "clear and delicate."
4. No one should ever be invited, or obliged, to act in any way that could objectively offend against modesty or which could subjectively offend against his or her own delicacy or sense of privacy.

- **7b)** "Chastity is a most honorable virtue. It honors the self as well as the other. It may be a difficult virtue to attain. Yet the greater part of its difficulty lies not so much in the intensity of the sexual desire itself, but in the fact that sexual desire is constantly being aroused by a social environment that can think of little else...Chastity is, indeed, the virtue of wholeness, the virtue that prevents us from the disgrace of being reduced to a mere appetite (cf. *Catechism* paragraph 2339)...Moreover, because the heart of chastity is love, the chaste person is more faithful to those whom he loves and therefore refrains from making the other person subordinate to his pleasure. Chastity frees us to love others justly and faithfully" (*The Many Faces of Virtue*, Donald De Marco, p. 33-34).
- **7c)** "That chastity would mean abstinence before marriage and complete fidelity during marriage may seem to be too demanding. But in a real way, it frees us from so much confusion and pressure. It allows a couple to become closer for the right reasons, and to communicate at the proper levels, and not be overwhelmed or pressured into a marital decision." (As quoted in *Raise Happy Children, Teach Them Joy*, Mary Ann Budnick, RB Media)
- **7d)** The basic teaching of the Catholic Church on sexual ethics is this : "One can rightly choose to exercise one's genital sexual powers only when one, as a spouse, freely chooses to engage in the conjugal act and, in that act, chooses to respect fully the goods of mutual self-giving and of human procreation. From this it follows that it is never morally right to unite sexually outside of marriage, i.e. to fornicate or commit adultery, or to masturbate or commit sodomy, i.e. have oral or anal intercourse, whether with a person of the opposite or same sex, nor ought one intentionally to bring about or maintain sexual arousal unless in preparation for the conjugal act"...Catholic teaching liberates people "and enables them to become fully themselves. It helps them to come into possession of their desires and not be possessed by them. It does so because it is rooted in a profound reference for human persons, male and female, as bodily sexual beings, summoned from their depths to self-giving love." (*Catholic Sexual Ethics*, William E. May, pamphlet from the Knights of Columbus, The Veritas Series)
- **7e)** An integrated person has learned to discipline feelings, passions, and emotions so that the mind, the will, and the body are unified, acting in accord with reason. Due to the effects of original sin, a person can be easily drawn to sin, acting without reason. Therefore, one must practice the virtue of chastity as well as other virtues in order to be an integrated person.

Additional Resources on the Virtue of Chastity

Seventh Grade and Eighth Grade

- *Pure Faith: A Handbook of Prayer for Catholic Youth* by Jason Evert.
- *Goretti*, Naoum, Samer (Small booklet) www.chastity.com
- *Saints for Young Readers for Every Day, Volume 2*, Wallace, Susan Helen, Pauline Books and Media.
- *Saint of the Day, Lives, Lessons, Feasts*, Foley and McCloskey, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *Best-Loved Saints*, Lovasik, Fr. Lawrence G. S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2007.
- *Modern Saints, Their Lives and Faces*, Book One, Ball, Ann, Tan Publishers.
- DVD's *Theology of the Body for Teens – Middle School Edition*, leader guide and student workbook, Ascension Press available Fall, 2011.
- DVD: *Fourteen Flowers of Pardon*, The Life and Death of Saint Marie Goretti, Documentary

Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade

- *Raising Pure Teens 10 Strategies to Protect (or Restore) Your Teenagers Innocence* by Jason Evert & Chris Stefanick, www.chastity.com.
- *DVDs: Theology of the Body for Teens*, by Jason and Crystalina Evert and Brian Butler, DVD series, 12-20 minute presentations, Leader's Guide and Student Workbook, Ascension Press.
- *DVD: Romance without Regret – Catholic Edition*, by Jason and Chrystalina Evert.
- *A Case for Chastity, the Way to Real Love and True Freedom for Catholic Teens*, Gallagher, Heather and Vlahutin, Peter, Liguori Press.
- *Theology of His Body and Theology of Her Body*, Jason Evert, Ascension Press.
- *Pure Faith: A Handbook of Prayer for Catholic Youth* by Jason Evert, www.chastity.com.
- *Pure Love*, (small booklet) Jason Evert, Catholic Answers, Inc., 888-291-8000, www.catholic.com.
- *Pure Womanhood*, (booklet) Crystalina Evert, Catholic Answers, Inc., 888-291-8000.
- *Pure Manhood*, (small booklet) Jason Evert, Catholic Answers, Inc., 888-291-8000, www.catholic.com.
- *If You Really Loved Me: 100 Questions on Dating, Relationships, and Sexual Purity* by Jason Evert.
- *Real Love*, Bonacci, Mary Beth, Ignatius Press.
- *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, Guidelines for Education within the Family*, Pontifical Council for the Family, available at www.vatican.va, Click on English, Type in doc in the Search box.
- *What the Church Teaches About Sex, God's Plan for Human Happiness*, Fastiggi, Robert L.
- *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, May, William E., The Veritas Series by the Knights of Columbus.
- *Modern Saints, Their Lives and Faces*, Book One, Ball, Ann, Tan Publishers.
- *Saint of the Day, Lives, Lessons, Feasts*, Foley, Leonard, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press.
- *The Heart of Virtue, Lessons from Life and Literature Illustrating the Beauty and Value of Moral Character*, De Marco, Donald, Ignatius Press.
- *DVD / Video: Fourteen Flowers of Pardon*, The Life and Death of Saint Marie Goretti, Documentary
- *DVD: Maria Goretti*, Ignatius Press, 105 minutes
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* referenced under Chastity in the Index:
 - Call to chastity / Chastity and charity paragraphs 2345, 2348, 2355, 2346
 - Conjugal chastity and marriage 2365, 2368
 - Consecrated life and chastity 915, 944
 - Following Christ and chastity 2053
 - Friendship and chastity 2347
 - Holy Spirit at the origin of the virtue of chastity 1832, 2345
 - Meaning of chastity, increase in chastity 2395, 2343,
 - Offenses against chastity 2351-56, 2396
 - Pure hearts and chastity 2518, 2520, 2532
 - Stages of growth in chastity and states of life 2339, 2341, 2344, 2346, 2395, 2348-2350
 - Temperance, the virtue that directs chastity 2341
 - Chastity of those engaged to marry 1632, 2350