

HOME/SCHOOL/PARISH CONNECTION

Purity



Virtue of the Month:
Purity

Saintly Exemplar:
Blessed Virgin Mary



Icon of the Holy Family
Cathedral of
St. Joseph the Workman

O Virgin Mother,
who was never defiled
by the stain of sin,
neither actual
nor original,
to you I commend
and entrust
the purity of my heart.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: (noted as CCC)

Baptism confers on its recipient the grace of *purification from all sins*. But the baptized must continue to struggle against the inclination to sin, also known as concupiscence of the flesh and disordered desires. With God's grace the person will prevail. Ongoing *purification of the heart* demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and purity of vision. The struggle against carnal sin involves *purifying the heart* and practicing temperance. *Purity of heart* requires the modesty which is patience, decency, and discretion. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. *Purity of heart* will enable us to see God; it enables us even now to see things according to God (CCC 2520, 2532, 2530, 2533, 2531).

What is the Virtue of Purity?

Purity is the virtue which struggles against disordered desires, stemming from the effects of original sin. It allows the heart to be purified through practicing temperance. It manifests itself in a cleanness, a clarity of heart in freedom from evil and sin. People who are 'pure in heart' refer to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God's holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity, chastity / moral integrity, and love of truth / orthodoxy of faith. (*Catechism*, CCC paragraph 2518)

- One reaches purity of heart through purity of intention, purity of vision, both exterior and interior, discipline of the memory, imagination and feelings, by prayer and through the virtue and gift of chastity. Chastity is treating an individual as a person to be loved rather than a thing to be used.
- Purity requires *modesty which*, while protecting the intimate center of the person, expresses the sensitivity of chastity. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons. It requires a *purification of the social climate* by means of a constant struggle against moral permissiveness that is founded on an erroneous conception of human freedom.
- In the battle against disordered desires the baptized person is able, only by the grace of God, to achieve purity. Through cooperation with the graces received in the Sacrament of Penance, a person is cleansed, healed and purified from sin leading to a growing purity of heart. Hearts cleansed by the blood of Jesus are then filled with the Holy Spirit. (cf. 1John 1:7)

Why do we need the Virtue of Purity?

- The 'pure in heart' will see God face to face and "be like Him for they shall see Him as He is." (1 John 1:2) Purity disallows any obstacles to receiving God.
- Purity of heart allows us to recognize our personal dignity and the dignity of others. Even now it enables us to see *as God sees*, to accept others as 'neighbors'; it lets us perceive the human body – ours and our neighbor's – as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of divine beauty. (cf. CCC 2519)
- There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith. Purity of heart allows us to know the truth, understand what we believe and to love God with an undivided heart and body.
- The pure in heart experience inner peace, joy, freedom, transparency, radiance of soul, love, and live with humble sincerity and reverence toward others.
- Thoughts, words, and actions that are impure or sinful cause our mind and heart to be clouded, leading to spiritual blindness. Thus we want to follow God's way of purity which protects us from harmful and miserable effects.

Suggestions for teaching the Virtue of Purity at Home:

Common principles for the practice of purity within the family:

- Parents are to protect the innocence of their children. At Baptism, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the soul of your child, making him a home of the Holy Spirit. Because of his/her young age, as parents, you have the responsibility to guard your child as this temple by protecting what he sees and hears. (1Cor3:16-17)
- As your children begin to experience inappropriate things that are out of your control, they need to be helped to develop the virtue of purity so that they can eventually take responsibility for protecting themselves. Speak to your children about how to distinguish if something is good or bad for them. This will help them to protect their purity of heart.
- If something we are watching, reading etc. causes us to feel peaceful, full of joy and well being, then this is of God and will lead us to purity. If something we are watching or listening to, such as violent TV or movies that go against the Ten Commandments, causes us to be uncomfortable, fearful, anxious, agitated, to lose peace and feel discouraged or depressed, we need to resist and turn away from these things as this is not of God and will contribute to leading us down the path to impurity. Efforts to prevent our minds and hearts from being filled with impure thoughts should include choosing to watch inspirational, wholesome movies and reading materials that uplift our spirit and leave us with peace and joy. Peace is a definite sign that something is good and is of God. We find peace and are truly free when we operate within healthy boundaries of seeking the good and avoiding evil. God's plan for purity does not deprive us of our personal freedom, but provides loving limitations that protect us from misery and harm.
- God will cleanse us of our sin when we make a good confession. We are to make a firm commitment, with the help of His grace, to not commit these sins again, as prayed for in the Act of Contrition. That commitment means avoiding the situations that lead to the sin of impurity. This could mean changing certain habits of watching TV programs by choosing to watch only wholesome and inspirational movies, as well as reading uplifting and truly good and beneficial materials. To protect the virtue of purity, we need to choose friends wisely, associating with those who have the same goal of following the way of Christ and living the virtues.
- **Children and young people**, in order to preserve and foster the virtue of purity, need to be guided in what to do and what to avoid. Assist them to:
 - Avoid the occasions of sin: In particular avoid bad companions, indecent and suggestive music, magazines, books, papers, internet sights, TV programs, movies, and video games.
 - Develop discipline and good will: Practice self-control to resist temptation by avoiding idleness. Help young people to keep themselves usefully occupied either with work or wholesome recreation (especially outdoors); accustom themselves to hard work including helping others who cannot help themselves with difficult and sometimes disagreeable tasks.
 - Dress modestly: Modesty does not mean looking unattractive or covering every inch of the body as if it's bad or dirty. However, the way that they (and we) dress conveys a message that we respect ourselves as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Clothing our bodies modestly allows the invitation of respect for the whole person.

Purity

Blessed Virgin Mary

Use the weapons given us by God to live the virtue of purity:

1. Attend Mass each Sunday to be strengthened by Christ. Receive the Sacrament of Confession so our conscience is clear.
2. Acknowledge an impure thought to Jesus and then give it to Him. Discuss it with your confessor, even if it did not lead to sin because bringing a temptation into the light will break its power.
3. Pray daily to follow Jesus' plan for love, rather than settling for less. The stronger we become spiritually, the less we will be subject to manipulation.
4. Speak with strong Catholic adults about these matters. A priest and parents provide support and wise guidance.



Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Prayer to Our Blessed Mother

Mary, Mother most pure,
I come at this hour begging for you to
plead with God for me. I earnestly wish
to be pure in thought, word, and deed in
imitation of your holy purity.

O Virgin Mother,
who was never defiled
by the stain of sin,
neither actual nor original,
to thee I commend and
entrust the purity of my heart.

Father Lawrence Lovasik, S.V.D.

Suggestions for teaching the Virtue of Purity at Home:

Aspects in teaching the virtue of purity for children and young people:

- Cooperate with God's grace: With the help of God's grace, we can grow in purity. Help your children to be faithful in practicing the Faith. Be faithful in daily prayer, both morning and evening. Go to Mass and receive Jesus in Holy Communion every Sunday as His Divine strength is needed to remain pure. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a monthly basis to be purified of sins and to be strengthened to resist temptations of impurity. Cultivate a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, asking for her help to remain pure.

Aspects in teaching the virtue of purity for teens and adults:

- Show respect for the body: When our souls are in the state of sanctifying grace, God actually resides within us as in a consecrated temple. Our soul is in every part of our body. Therefore, every part is dwelt in by God and is sacred, holy, and deserving of our reverence. This is true also of those parts which purity requires you to keep hidden, and which for that reason are called the private parts. Husband and wife are invited to be co-creators with God by sharing in the creation of another human being. There is a greater sacredness to the private parts of the body which share in this incredible gift. Above all, the woman's body is the portal of the temple of human life. As the gateway through which new human lives enter into this world, that part of the woman's body is truly sacred and should be most carefully guarded by privacy and modesty
- Protect the sanctity of marital relations: Since the enjoyment of sexual pleasure is permissible only in the married state, the willful indulgence in it outside the married state is always a serious sin of impurity. There is nothing impure or shameful in the pleasure itself, but it is reserved exclusively for the love of a man and woman in a sacramental, marital union. God's perfect plan for authentic love is for our protection against being used as an object for sexual pleasure. Any physical relations before marriage is not love but lust.
- Dress modestly: Clothing our bodies modestly allows the invitation of respect for *personhood* avoiding the focusing of attention on a particular part of the body, apart from the person. Drawing attention to private parts of the body could likely arouse the desire for inappropriate sexual pleasures.
- Develop healthy relationships: It is best to avoid dating one person until after high school. Dating in high school puts undue pressure on young people. It is best for teens to develop friendships and enjoy the good things in life with freedom. Don't let manipulation or fear control relationships. Young people must not be afraid of offending or losing a boyfriend or girlfriend for not yielding to inappropriate physical closeness that might put one in a vulnerable position to temptation. In order to be loved as they deserve, teens need to overcome these insecurities through your guidance and support and through daily prayer.
- Guard the body and the mind: Help your teen to avoid forming their imagination with impure images: sensual TV shows, movies, magazines, gossip, or music that glorifies meaningless sex. Every image remains with us, forms the way the way that we think and affects the way that we treat ourselves and others. Do not use alcoholic beverages or drugs, which numbs the conscience and does not allow for reasonable decisions.
- Practice chastity: Chastity is treating an individual as a person to be loved rather than a thing to be used. Chastity helps us to overcome the temptation of lust, which is a result of the effects of original sin.
- The Church's assistance: The Church's role is to support the parents in their duty as primary educators of their children. The parent's responsibility is "original and primary" "irreplaceable and inalienable." It is a sacred trust that cannot be given away or taken. Teachers will help parents to educate their education for purity, chastity, and modesty in the context of the moral life of the Catholic Church.
- Different Stages of Development: In *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, Guidelines for Education within the Family, Pontifical Council for the Family, Vatican City, the document identifies different stages to help parents assume their responsibility and learn to foster the development of their child. These stages of development are: the years of innocence, five years to puberty (the first sign of changes in one's body), puberty, adolescence in one's plan in life, and toward adulthood. In a wholesome environment, the relationship with God can thrive, one's gifts can be discovered, creativity can blossom, and one's sexuality (their masculinity or femininity) can become integrated in their personality in a balanced way. Parents should protect and foster an environment that is developmentally appropriate for each child. (Go to www.newadvent.org and click on library for the document)
- Protective Attitude: Avoid "Shock Value": Young minds are not equipped emotionally to deal with sexually explicit and violent information. Protect the innocence of your children.
- Take your responsibility seriously or your children will hear untimely, inaccurate information from friends.

"In the most holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby She exists without spot or wrinkle (cf. Eph. 5:27)"; and at the same time the Council says that "the followers of Christ still strive to increase in holiness by conquering sin, and so they raise their eyes to Mary, who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as a model of the virtues."

Redemptoris Mater

On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the Pilgrim Church

**HIS HOLINESS
JOHN PAUL II
March 25, 1987**



Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal
Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman

Purity

Blessed Virgin Mary



Also Known As:
 Blessed Virgin Mary
 Mother of God / Mother of Jesus
 Immaculate Conception
 Mother of the Church
 Queen of Heaven & Earth
 Wife of St. Joseph
 Patroness of the United States

Feast Days:
 Jan 1 – Mary, Mother of God
 March 25 – Annunciation
 August 15 – Assumption
 Dec 8 – Immaculate Conception

Her Life

- Mary was born to Joachim and Anne. Mary was given to service as a consecrated virgin in the Temple in Jerusalem at three years old.
- The Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin in the same way Eve was free from sin before the Fall. This miracle, which we refer to as the Immaculate Conception, was accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the merits procured by the Death and Resurrection of her Son, Jesus Christ. She received, in advance, the graces the Paschal Mystery would obtain. Therefore, she was immaculate, pure, perfect – free from all sin. In addition, Mary never committed any personal sin.
- While in her teens, Mary was betrothed to Joseph. Betrothal included the covenant of marriage but did not include the spouses living together as yet.
- The archangel Gabriel announced that she had been chosen to bear the Son of God. She consented to God’s desire. In a dream, Joseph was told to take Mary into his home and he obeyed. Mary and Joseph lived together as husband and wife and had a deep marital love for each other though they did not express this love in physical relations. According to Pope John Paul II, the more important union is the union of persons in Christ. The physical expression of the gift of self is an important part of marital love but in the case of Mary and Joseph, their “bodies did not speak”. (CCC 496-507)
- Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that her cousin, Elizabeth was also expecting a child. Mary immediately went to visit and help Elizabeth.
- Joseph and Mary were required to travel to Bethlehem because of the census. While they were there Mary gave birth to Jesus.
- Little is recorded in Scripture about Mary and Joseph during Jesus’ hidden years. At Passover, when Jesus was 12 He was lost for three days in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph searched for Jesus, finding Him in the temple.
- Jesus worked His first recorded miracle at the request of His mother, Mary, when He turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana.
- Mary stood at the foot of the Cross at Jesus’ crucifixion, the birth of the Church. With Jesus’ words to John, “Behold your Mother,” Mary became the Mother of the Church and the mother of every Christian. Mary was with the Apostles at Pentecost. She was assumed, body and soul, into Heaven.

How is the Blessed Virgin Mary a model of purity?

- Mary is the model of purity because she was conceived and born free from original sin. She was pure, untarnished, and “full of grace.” Mary remained free from sin because of her choices and her life-long “yes” to God’s will.
- Mary was not corrupted by jealousy, gossip, lies, greed or any sin. She respected and loved everyone. Her thoughts and actions were never sinful.
- Mary’s heart, her will, was always completely open and available to God’s grace as she cooperated with His plan to restore supernatural life to souls. Mary lived the virtue of purity perfectly, which allowed the Holy Spirit to work in her without any obstacles. (More info on Mary available from Office of Catechesis)