

The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality

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Questions for Chapter 1 Christ: the Image and Likeness of God

The Uniqueness of Human Sexual Behavior and its Social Import

1. Even to the Jews, well versed in Scripture, Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage was shocking. In teaching this, what norm did Jesus set up for our behavior?
Man's state in Eden before the fall is the norm that Jesus sets up for us.
2. In early Christianity, what characteristics of the Christian way of life became a touchstone as a means for pagans to identify Christians?
Virginity or chastity became a means of identifying Christians because they stood out so starkly from the pagan background.
3. How did the martyrs themselves regard the practice of chastity? Of what was it a sign?
Chastity was a small thing in the eyes of the early Christians. It was their love for Christ, who wanted them to be chaste, that gave them their determination to be chaste.
4. From the earliest days the teachings of the Church on sexual morality has been very firm. What happened as a result of this firmness?
As a result, there have been many difficulties in the Church, many disputes and contentions, and many a loss of members because of the Church's firmness on matters of sexual morality.
5. The error of thinking that sexual behavior is only a private matter has led to erroneous thinking about the relationship between God and His Church, and between the individual and society. The author gives several results of this "privatizing" of sexual conduct. List these results—for the Church and for society.
**If sex is merely a private matter, then relations between God and the Church are merely private, thus calling into question the very nature of the Church.
Division among Catholics regarding *Humanae Vitae* and abortion paved the way for the Supreme Court decision based on "privacy" which further led to the killing of defective infants and euthanasia of the sick and elderly. Ironically, government ratification of "the right to privacy" has now made sex a public affair. This includes the government mandating how children shall be educated about sex; it also influences policies on foreign aid that our country offers to third world countries.**
6. What does the author say Catholics are meant to be; and what is necessary in order for our witness as Christians to ring true?
As Catholics we are meant to be lights shining in the darkness of surrounding sexual immorality. By the example of our chastity, we are to bring people to Christ, who is the source of chastity...our witness can only ring true if we are indeed being chaste.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR

7. The author gives several reasons why persons may not be convinced of the goodness of their bodies. What are they?
 - a. fear of our sexuality because of its violence and the ease with which it can get out of control
 - b. we dread God's punishment for the sins it may easily lead us to
 - c. we despise our sexual powers because they seem gross or dirty
 - d. we find pleasure in them but no sense of true meaning, significance or human worth
8. What does the author say is the best protection from sin in this matter?

The best protection from sin in this matter is to revere and esteem our sexuality as God reveres and esteems it.
9. What does the author say are the three best characteristics for describing Christian chastity?

Power, love and self-control are probably the three best characteristics for describing Christian chastity.

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

10. In recent times some moral theologians have falsely argued that the Church cannot define moral doctrines which apply in all times and places. Explain their reasoning.

Theologians say that morals are something other than faith and are not deducible from it, that moral doctrine is largely culturally determined, that it grows from the circumstances of time and place and is therefore not something that can be solemnly defined for all times and places.
11. What does the Church, as pointed out by the Council of Trent, teach about the relationship between faith and morals?

The Council taught that faith and morals are NOT two distinct items—they are related to each other. The Council dealt “with matters of faith and the morals that pertain to the upbuilding of the teaching of that faith.”
12. What does the faith teach about sexuality? Who is the sole norm for what it is to be truly human?

Most obviously, that God created man male and female. That man was created in the image and according to the likeness of God. More particularly, St. Paul speaks of Jesus saying, “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; in Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible....All things were created through Him and for Him.” Christ, then is the image of God in which man was created. Jesus Christ, therefore is the sole norm of what it is to be truly human, of what man is or is meant to be.
13. What follows from the idea that we can get “a right picture of human sexuality only insofar as it is contained in Christ”?

It follows, since integral human nature is understandable only in Christ, that integral human sexuality is a mystery of faith. The mystery of man's sexuality is the mystery of its likeness to Christ's. He is the norm for all we do, think, or hope to be. It is Christ who sets all the questions and problems, contexts and answers; not we, not our sciences.