

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
RCIA Class Transcript
The Commandments # 7, 8, 10
Lecturer: Father Francis Peffley
Date: March 8, 2005

Tonight we're going to cover the Commandments Number Six through Ten. We have lots of great material to cover tonight. We'll try to move quickly and get through all of these last Commandments. The way it works out is that we talk together about Commandments Number Seven and Ten, which is "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods," because they're connected. Then we talk together about the Sixth Commandment and the Ninth Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." Again, we talk about those together. We'll talk about the Eighth Commandment separately.

As we've talked about before, all the Commandments are about honoring God:

- The first Three Commandments: honoring God, honoring His Name, honoring the Lord's Day
- The Fourth Commandment: honoring our parents
- The Fifth Commandment: honoring life – "Thou shalt not kill"
- The Sixth Commandment: honoring your neighbor's spouse, and one's own body, treating it as a temple of God, and a temple of the Holy Spirit
- The Seventh Commandment: honoring other people's property – "Thou shalt not steal"
- The Eighth Commandment: honoring the truth - "Thou shalt not bear false witness"
- The Ninth and Tenth Commandments: honoring your neighbor's property, possessions, and spouse

You could boil all Ten Commandments down into honoring God and honoring your neighbor. The way God gave us the Commandments was He gave us the negative: "Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness."

I'm going to start with the Seventh and Tenth Commandments: "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." In the Seventh Commandment, God forbids all dishonesty. Examples are stealing, cheating, unjustly keeping what belongs to others, damaging another person's properties or possessions, or the case of accepting bribes as a public official. Those are all ways in which a person could dishonor the Seventh Commandment of "Thou shalt not steal."

The Seventh Commandment has to do with external actions, whereas the Tenth Commandment has to do with intentions and desires. Do you see the difference between "Thou shalt not steal" as talking about external actions? "Thou shalt not

covet” or “Thou shalt not be envious or jealous of your neighbor’s goods” has to do with intention or desire.

What are some of the violations of the Seventh Commandment? First of all, there is stealing. Another word for that is theft. It’s a little different than robbery, and I’ll explain the difference in just a second. Stealing or theft is secretly taking somebody else’s property, like breaking into their house at night or when they’re on vacation. That’s called stealing or theft. Robbery is open and forceful taking of another person’s property or possessions.

Another violation of the Seventh Commandment is cheating. This is depriving another of his property by a crafty means, such as:

- Somebody who counterfeits money
- Somebody who does forgery, forging documents
- Smuggling
- Overcharging
- Excessive profits
- Somebody, let’s say, in the case of the hurricanes down in Florida, where instead of normally charging a dollar a gallon for water, they would charge five dollars, just because they know that everybody wants it; that would be wrong to do; cornering the market or gauging prices up, just to take advantage of when people are hurt or hurting.
- Arson, with the view of collecting insurance money; like that little story of two guys sitting at the bar, and one says, “I heard your warehouse burned down last night.” The other one says, “Shhh. That’s going to be tomorrow night.” That would be wrong, of course, to burn down your warehouse, so you could get the insurance money.
- Copying off somebody’s test or exam

Then there’s what’s called *usury*. Usury is charging excessive amounts of interest on money. The Bible talks about that. It is wrong to charge excessive amounts of interest on money. It’s very common these days, if you borrow money from a bank, you’re going to pay a certain amount of interest, and that’s acceptable. But this is really taking advantage of people. For example, in prison, somebody might lend some money to somebody, and then they’ll be charged an excessive amount to pay it back. That would be wrong.

Another sin against the Seventh Commandment is unjustly damaging another person’s property or possessions deliberately. Obviously, there are things like accidents which happen. To deliberately deface other people’s property or possessions (vandalism, for example) would be what’s called the *willful* damage of another person’s property or possessions.

We do need to make restitution. If we steal something we need to give it back. If the person is passed away, you can give it to their heirs. If there’s no way to pay the person back, you could give it to charity. If somebody stole money from a

particular business that's long out of business, you could give that equivalent amount of money to charity.

A sin against the Seventh Commandment would be accepting bribes, or embezzlement, for example. Or, not paying one's debts properly. This brings up the topic of people declaring bankruptcy. A lot of times people get themselves into such debt that they just go ahead and declare bankruptcy. Of course, that would not be the right thing to do, because somebody has to pay for that. It really is a form of stealing, if somebody deliberately spends so much money that they can't pay off the debt, and then declare bankruptcy.

Other things under the Seventh Commandment are the fact that employers have to pay a just wage to their employees. Employees should not waste time. They should do a full day's work for a full day's pay. Let's say if somebody was being paid good money, but they were just goofing off all the time; that would be wrong, because that would be a form of stealing.

I mentioned if we do damage somebody's property, we have to do our best to pay them back. For example, this is in Luke Chapter 19, with Zaccheus. It says, "Zaccheus declared that if he had defrauded anyone, he would pay them back in full." Zaccheus even said, "I'll even pay them back four-fold," which was not something required; but he did it anyway, because he wanted to show his great conversion to the Lord.

If property is stolen, we need to restore it to the owner. There's a saying that "Everyone's property calls out to the person that owns it." If we have borrowed something from somebody, we do need to get it back to them, because that property is calling out for its owner. Just like in The Lord of the Rings, the ring was calling out to its owner; the ring wanted to get back to its owner.

The Tenth Commandment, which is "Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's goods," has to do with envy at the success of others. Do you remember what envy is? Envy is sadness over another person's blessings. For example, resolving to steal something that belongs to someone, even if the person doesn't carry it out, the person has the intention of stealing it. Let's say a bunch of guys are plotting to rob a bank; they show up at the bank that day and the cops happen to be out front, and they decide not to do it. They still committed the sin of the intention of going to rob that bank. Sin is in the will; it's in the intention. That's why if somebody does something by accident, it's not a sin. If somebody accidentally knocks over your grandmother's expensive vase, that would not be a sin. If you picked it up and smashed it, that would be. Bishop Sheen said, "If it's expensive, it's a vase," (pronounced vahhz). "If it's cheap, it's a vase!"

Another example of violating the Tenth Commandment would be children who wish that their parents would die so they can collect their inheritance. That would be wrong.

Under this topic of the Seventh and Tenth Commandments, we have what we call *social justice*. The Church is very big on social justice. It's the exercise of our God-given individual rights in relation to the common welfare of society. It has to do with economic life, how we take care of the needy and the poor. We're all in this together. We all have obligations towards our fellow man. No matter if some are hungry or needy, we have an obligation to try to help the needy and the poor.

There are many encyclicals, papal documents, and papal letters written about this. For example, Pope Leo XIII wrote a great deal in the 1800's. Pius XI wrote a great deal about this in the 20th century, in the early 1900's. One of the teachings of the Church is that everybody has a right to private property, that you're allowed to own a house, car, property, and land. That's a fundamental right, that we're allowed to do this. That's why communism, or socialism, is wrong, because it doesn't allow people to own their own property or possessions. The Church sees problems with socialism and communism. It also sees problems with laissez-faire capitalism, where the rich have no concern for the poor. That's not right either. There are dangers in both the socialistic society, and even dangers in capitalism, even though there are many good things about capitalism: we get to use our free enterprise system, and work hard, and succeed. There is danger there when, for example, the rich, in million-dollar homes, are living just a few miles from people living in little shacks. Again, we have to also help the needy, help the poor, give them dignity, and help them have good jobs. If somebody is crippled or handicapped, we need to assist them.

Under capital and labor, the Church teaches that the employers do have to treat their employees with charity and with dignity, and to give them a just wage. There have to be good working conditions. There are just all sorts of stories about terrible working conditions in other conditions, or child labor that's taking place in other countries. The Church is very concerned that people work in a place of dignity.

Employees have to do a full day's work for a full day's pay, and render obedience and respect to their employers, and be honest and just in dealing with their fellow employees. Trade unions are acceptable in the eyes of the Church, which are associations of workers aimed at improving the working conditions in which the individuals work.

(A question). That's a good case. If you go into your husband's wallet, is that stealing? I would say it depends on the attitude of the husband. It's not stealing if you know the other person has it there for you to take, for example, if the other spouse is aware that you need this money for this or that. Remember the other story of two men who were talking. One says, "I can't believe my wife. Monday she asked for \$20. Tuesday she asked for \$40. Wednesday she asked for \$60. Friday she asked for \$100." The other fellow says, "What in the world is she spending all that money on?" The first guy said, "I don't know. I never give her

any.” The idea is that, in this case, if the spouse is aware that you can take money out of the billfold, then it’s acceptable.

Let’s move on to the Eighth Commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” Under the Eighth Commandment, we’re commanded to speak the truth in all things. This is because God is Truth. We’re obliged to respect the truth. Jesus said, “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.” Jesus didn’t say, “I teach you the Truth,” He said, “I am the Truth.” Christ is the Incarnate Son of God. He is Truth Incarnate, God who became flesh. The Book of Leviticus says, in Chapter 19, “You shall not lie.” That’s why a lie, even if it’s told for a good purpose, is always a sin, because it’s contrary to the nature of God, who is Truth.

In the Eighth Commandment, God forbids us to detract in any way from our neighbor’s good name or reputation. The Book of Proverbs says, “A good name is better than great riches, and good favor is above silver and gold.” A person’s good name and reputation is perhaps one of the most valuable possessions in life. St. James says that, “Many of our sins are committed with the tongue,” (gossiping, lying, backbiting, slander, calumny, and detraction). They say if a person can control their speech, in not gossiping, backbiting, committing slander or detraction, that person is well on their way to becoming a saint. Isn’t it true? Mother Angelica said that once as well. She said, “If only I could control my tongue, I’d become a great saint.”

The definition of a lie is speaking something contrary to what is on your mind, or to what you know to be the truth. There are times when the person asking has no authority to know the truth. For example, when Christians were hiding the Jews during World War II, trying to save their lives, if the Nazis came to the door and said, “Do you have any Jews that you’re hiding,” even in that case, a Christian should not lie. But, they would have to come up with what’s called an *evasive response*, saying, “How dare you think I would be harboring the enemies of Hitler!” You have to come up with a creative way of speaking the truth, being evasive, because we should obviously never lie, even to bring about a good. There is an example here, in one of the stories of the saints, that St. Athanasius, who was the Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, was concealed in a vessel on the Nile, when the soldiers of the emperor Julian overtook and stopped it. On their inquiring where Athanasius was, the servant replied, “He has not gone far,” and the soldiers went on looking for him. So, he said a true statement, “He’s not gone far,” which was true, because he was hiding in the barrel right there. That’s the idea, that we should always speak the truth, and it’s possible, if somebody wants to interpret that in a different way, that’s up to them. That’s called an evasive statement.

Like the story of the woman who comes home and says, “Honey, I got a little bit of water in the carburetor,” and the husband says, “Okay, where’s the car?” She says, “At the bottom of the lake.” That’s called being evasive; that’s not what

we're talking about here. We're allowed to give an answer which has a double meaning, in the case where, to shield harm from ourselves or others.

Again, we should never lie; we should always speak the truth. Also remember that not all the truth has to be spoken all at once. We're allowed to remain silent. That's what happened to the great saint St. Thomas More, when he was about to be beheaded by Henry VIII. Thomas More just remained silent. He said, "I am God's good servant first, and also the king's; but I belong to God first."

Some of the sins against the Eighth Commandment are what's called detraction, calumny, and rash judgment. Let's go through each of these.

First, let's start with lying. The definition of lying is "a saying for the purpose of deceiving others what we know or suspect to be untrue." Remember that the end does not justify the means. We can't do evil to bring about good. That's one of the basic teachings of moral theology – you can never do evil to bring about good.

There are a few different kinds of lies. The first is called a *malicious* lie. A malicious lie is told for the purpose of injuring someone. That would be a mortal sin, to tell a lie to seriously injure another person. A lie taken under oath is called *perjury*. That's a mortal sin, to perjure one's self, to lie under oath.

The second kind of lie is called an *officious* lie. It's also called a *white* lie. This would be told to avert evil from one's self or others.

The third kind of lie is called a *jocose* lie, which is a lie told to amuse others. Very often, it's not a sin at all. If it's done for amusement, especially when you tell the person, "Oh, I was just joking." If it has harmful results, then it could be sinful.

There are other kinds of sins against truth, or against the nature of speech. One is *hypocrisy*. This is what the Scribes and the Pharisees were guilty of, acting a lie. It's pretending to be better than we are. A good example of this from Scripture is that Judas was hypocritical when he went to kiss the Lord. He was portraying friendship, but he was actually turning Him in to be killed, betraying Him.

Then there is *flattery*. Flattery consists in praising a person immoderately against one's own inner convictions for an ulterior motive, in order to take advantage of the other person, for whatever reason.

There's also what's called *rash judgment*. We talked a few months ago about judgment. We all have to make judgments all the time. Before you pull out onto the street, you have to look both ways to see how fast the cars are coming. We have judges that make decisions on cases. We have jurors. Judging is not necessarily wrong. In fact, our whole legal system is based on that. Rash judgment is when a person, without sufficient reason, believes something harmful

about another person's character. This is found in Matthew, Chapter 7, when the Lord says, "Do not judge, that you may not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned." We leave the judgment to God. We don't know the person's heart; we don't know the disposition of the heart. Yes, we can judge external actions, like adultery, homosexual activity, or stealing. Yes, we can judge those external actions. But, rash judgment is without sufficient reason, believing something harmful to another person's character.

The next one is called *detraction*. Detraction is when, without good reason, we make known the hidden faults of another person. They might be true faults, but we still should not know talk about them. Not to speak about what everybody already knows, for example, what's already appeared in the newspapers would not be detraction. Detraction is revealing the true faults or sins of another person.

There's also what's called *backbiting*. That's uncharitable conversation. It's discussing the faults of another person behind their back. It's wrong to listen to or participate in detraction and uncharitable conversation, and to take pleasure in it. What we should do, if somebody is committing detraction, or gossiping, we should try to change the subject, or go to the restroom, or go to the water fountain; avoid the conversation, or try to say something good, positive about the person. Like St. Paul says, "When you speak, speak with edifying words," to build people up, not to tear them down.

Then we get to the sin of what's called *calumny*, or *slander*. This is when a person lies, and injures the good name of another person. This is when somebody makes something up about a person. Of course, this would be a grave sin if it hurt somebody's reputation seriously.

The next topic has to do with keeping secrets. We are obliged to keep secrets when we've promised to do so, or when our office requires it, or when the good of another person demands it. Under this topic comes Confession. The priest may never reveal any sins that were confessed to him in Confession. It's called the *Seal of Confession*. We talked about that the priest would have to die before he would ever reveal somebody's sins. A priest could never go out and publish a book listing all the people that he'd heard Confessions of, and all their sins. That would be a terrible sin. It's never happened. There's never been a case where a priest has broken the Seal of Confession. Many priests have died under persecution for not revealing the sins of others in Confession. The priest has to keep it secret unto his death.

There are cases when, among lay people, where a secret may be revealed. For example, let's say a teenage girl is pregnant, and she tells her girlfriend that she's going to have an abortion. Does that have to be kept secret? No, the other girlfriend could go to the girl's parents and say, "Did you know that your daughter's pregnant? And, she's going to have an abortion." That's an example where a secret may be revealed; if it's for the good of the person; if it will save

ourselves or others from grave evil; or, where keeping a secret would be a sin against the welfare of society. For example, if somebody told you that they had nuclear weapons of mass destruction, or had biological chemicals and they said, "Don't tell anybody"; you have to go to the authorities; you have to report these things.

Under this topic also comes reading people's letters without permission, or eavesdropping. We have to not do those things.

If a person does hurt another person's good name or reputation by detraction or calumny, we have to do our very best to repair the damage, which is very hard to do. There was an example in the life of St. John Vianney, where a man came to him, and told him he had ruined peoples' good name and reputation. He said, "What should I do to try to repair it?" John Vianney said, "First, what I want you to do is to go out into the field and pick one of those dandelions that's already blossomed and has all those little white things on it. I want you to blow it, and I want you to go and gather up every one of those little white things." It's impossible to do. It was a good example. We can say something, and once it's out there in the newspapers or whatever, how hard it is to pick up the pieces of all those things. The best thing is to always use the gift of speech properly. Speak truthfully. Speak charitably. Don't fall into the sins of calumny or detraction.

That covers the Eighth Commandment of "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

(A question). With promises, we should keep the promises that we make, especially when it comes to vows that we make in religious life, as priests or nuns, or wedding vows, for example. Those things are sacred. Those things are even more important than regular promises, because these are vows, which are even higher than promises. Even in regard to promises, we do need to keep those, unless there's a grave reason not to. They're times where the parents say, "I promise I'll take you out for ice cream tonight," and tells the kids that, but if the mother has to go to the hospital, obviously there are times that you have to break light promises like that.

(A question). Is a half-truth a lie? It depends if the person has a right to know. For example, if the person has a right to know if it was their money, they have a right to know. If it's just some nosy neighbor that wants to gossip, then you don't have to. So, it depends on who wants to know. If a police officer comes to the door and asks you a question, they have a right to know certain things.

(A question). Let's say somebody does come to Confession, and confesses something very serious, and for example, that they do have some biological weapons. Yes, in the Confession, first, those things don't happen. Nobody comes in and says I have things like that.

It would be up to the priest to make every effort that he could. For example, suggest that they turn themselves in, and say, "I'm not going to give you absolution." In that scenario, that question would not even come up, because people, when they come to Confession, it's for something they've already done, and they're sorry for, and they want to go to Confession. Let's say you had somebody that had committed a murder; you actually could try to convince the person to turn themselves in. That's something done in the past. Nobody comes in and says, "I'm going to do something in the future." That usually just doesn't happen. Yes, it would be up to the priest to try to convince the person to do the right thing. If the person is not truly sorry or sincere, the priest would have a right to refuse the absolution and say, "No, I'm sorry. You have no desire to change your life. You have no desire to do anything different. This Confession would be no good to you." That would be one way to do it.

If there was somebody that had committed a crime (say, a serial killer) yes, the priest could say, "You do need to go to the police to turn yourself in, and to take the just result of your crimes." The priest couldn't say, "Hold on one second," and get his cell phone out and call the cops to say, "The guy leaving the Confessional right now is a serial killer." That's one thing we could not do. That would be breaking the Seal of Confession.

(A question). Can we assume all newborn babies are beautiful? That's a great question. For example, saying "That is a beautiful baby," is that what you're saying? Yes, because of course, anybody who is a Child of God is beautiful. We're all beautiful by the fact that God created us. "God doesn't make junk; He just collects it," as they say. Saying "That's a beautiful dress," "That's a beautiful hairstyle," "That's a beautiful toupée," or whatever you want to say, I'm sure it is beautiful to some people. I guess that's one way to look at it.

I remember this question came up last year in RCIA. People gave all sorts of scenarios where the wife says, "Do I look fat in this dress?" or, "Does this dress make me look fat?" Well, from whose perspective, let's say. It would be probably uncharitable always to say what's on our mind, but we can, I think, make a true statement, a charitable statement, a loving statement, that is true, without hurting the other person. Saying "Of course. Honey, you always look beautiful to me," kind of thing.

Let's go into the Sixth and Ninth Commandments. The Sixth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The Ninth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," which of course, is thy neighbor's husband, spouse, etc. By the Sixth Commandment, God tells us to be pure and modest in our behavior; in the Ninth Commandment, to be pure in our thoughts and our desires.

St. Paul says to the Corinthians in Chapter 6, "Do you not know that you are a temple of the Holy Spirit? Glorify God in your body." The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord." In looking at the Sixth Commandment, we should

always recognize the dignity of the human person. We're all made in the image and likeness of God.

We should consider what a beautiful gift chastity is. Chastity is another word for purity. A great example of chastity is our Blessed Mother; also, St. John the beloved disciple, the Virgin Apostle, the beloved Apostle of Christ. He was the one that was privileged to rest his head up against the Sacred Heart of Christ at the Last Supper. That's whom Christ entrusted His Mother to, and to Our Lady.

The Sixth Commandment forbids impurity, immodesty in words and actions, whether alone or with others. This Commandment forbids adultery, which is unfaithfulness of a married person. There are many harmful effects of adultery. It's a great evil which breaks up families and marriages, and the building block of society, which is the family.

Not only is adultery a sin against chastity, or purity, but it's a sin against justice, because of the injustice done toward the innocent spouse, toward the other person. Realize that matrimony is a holy state. Marriage is exclusive between one man and one woman until death, and it's faithful until death. It's indissoluble until death do they part. So, adultery, of course, is a mortal sin.

We also have what's called fornication. The definition of fornication would be relations between unmarried persons. That's always a mortal sin. Premarital sex, for example, sex before marriage between boyfriend and girlfriend. It's called the sin of fornication. It's mentioned many times in the New Testament. One of the handouts tonight is called "What Does The Bible Say About Premarital Sex?" It's mentioned 14 times in the New Testament, that it's proclaimed as immoral. For example, Jesus says, "From the heart comes evil intentions: murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, or slander. These are the things that make a man unclean." St. Paul talks about, "Keep away from fornication. All other sins are committed outside of the body, but to fornicate is to sin against one's own body. Your body you know is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received Him from God." It gives all these 14 passages from the New Testament to show why that is wrong.

It also, of course, has all sorts of harmful effects: emotionally, physically, with the passing of venereal diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancies before marriage that result sometimes in abortion, or result in all sorts of things.

Then we get to the topic of homosexuality. There are many places in the Bible that condemn it; over seven times the Bible condemns homosexual activity. What's not condemned is the individual themselves. The Church condemns homosexual activity, not the person. The person is still made in God's image and likeness.

When a person has that orientation, that's a very heavy cross that they have to carry. They're called to be pure, holy, and live good holy lives. There's even a good support group in the Catholic Church called COURAGE. The group called COURAGE encourages those who have that homosexual orientation to lead pure, holy lives, and not to engage in homosexual activity. The sin is in the activity, not in the person themselves; because a person who has that orientation is called to live a pure, holy life. COURAGE is actually a support group where the men or the women get together to pray. They pray the Rosary. They try to have pure, chaste friendships. It's very important to help people carry their cross. What they do is they, if they're not active homosexually, they can go to the sacraments; they can go to Communion; they can go to Confession. It's a support for people to lead pure lives. Homosexual activity, of course, is a mortal sin. We do need to pray for those who have that orientation, that they will draw strength from prayer and God's grace to live a pure, holy life.

Let's talk a little bit about some of the other things regarding the Ninth Commandment, which is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's spouse." I'd recommend reading the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 27. This is where the Lord gives His teaching about purity. He says, "You have heard it said to the ancients, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart." The Lord is very clear that adultery is not just an action; it could be an intention or desire. There's a difference between looking, observing, or seeing somebody, and lusting after them; so you see the difference. If you see a beautiful person and you admire their beauty that God gave them, such a beautiful person, and just looking at it like you would a sunset or something beautiful in nature, that's not a sin. It's when a person lusts or has impure desires about that person. The Lord says if they've done that, you've already committed adultery in the heart. Adultery of the heart is what this Commandment has to do with.

It's good to make a distinction between a *temptation* and a *sin*. We're not responsible for the thoughts that come into our mind without our wanting them. If a person does get a bad thought in their mind, what should they do? They should say, "I do not consent to that thought." They should banish that thought, get rid of that thought, and say, "I do not consent; I do not give in to that thought."

There's a difference between a temptation and a sin. A person could be tempted a hundred times a day, but not sin. It's when a person gives in to that temptation, when they dwell upon that and cultivate it, think about it once they realize it's there; that's when it moves from the realm of temptation into sin. It has to do with the willful consent of the person. As long as we have not given that consent, we are free from that sin.

What's the best way to handle those kinds of temptations? The best way is to flee from them, run from them right away. Don't try to grapple with it. Don't try to dwell upon it; just reject it right away.

(At this point, the first side of the tape ended. It resumes below).

The way to grow in the virtue of purity and chastity would be to pray. If a person prays, they'll be able to be pure. Without prayer, it's impossible to be pure and holy in this day and age, or probably any time in history. Also what will help is regular Confession, going to Confession on a regular basis, every couple of weeks (once a month is a good timeframe); going to regular Holy Communion, receiving the Lord as often as you can at Holy Communion, attending Mass; having special devotion to our Blessed Mother, who is the model of purity; praying to your holy Guardian Angel. Ask your Guardian Angel to help you to stay holy and pure. Pray to St. Joseph, the virginal spouse of Our Lady.

It requires the grace of God. Where do we get the grace of God? We get the grace of God from prayer and from the sacraments, and the reading of the Bible. One good practice is everyday, when you wake up, say three Hail Mary's for the virtue of purity that day.

Another help from the saints is they say to realize that you're always in the presence of God; God always is there with you. God sees everything. Jesus says, "Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Another helpful thing is to pray. Let's say if you see an attractive person, and you're tempted to have a bad thought or impure thought about the person, say a prayer for them. Start saying an Our Father or a Hail Mary for them. Or, say the prayer, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you. Save her soul," or, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you. Save his soul." That way you're actually praying for that person. That way the person becomes an occasion of grace, not an occasion of sin. An occasion of sin is a person, place, or thing that leads us away from God. If a person is tempted by a person, say a prayer for that person. That way, the person becomes an occasion of grace. That person's actually bringing you closer to God.

Make sure you dress respectfully and modestly, and not seductively, because there are many passages in Scripture and the lives of the saints where those who dress provocatively and lead other people into sin, it goes harder on them than it does to the other person. The person who leads somebody into sin by dressing seductively or provocatively, that's something we should always avoid. Just be extra careful of that.

(A question). It is very difficult for parents these days, because the fashions that are out there in the stores that your daughters want to buy when they're 13, 16,

years old or whatever; the fashions can be very immodest. I think the parents do have to look for clothing that is nice, but is not going to make the daughter look like a prostitute. I tell you, in this day and age, you go to the mall or something like that, most of the girls are dressed as young prostitutes. What prostitutes wore ten or twenty years ago, that's what many of them are wearing right now.

(A question). No. I would say if a person, let's say, has a one-piece bathing suit, a modest bathing suit on, then they're not out there flaunting it; they're not out there trying to get guys to have bad thoughts about them. I don't think that would be a problem if the person is wearing something that is modest. That's a good question. It is a tricky situation out there in this day and age.

I mean, look what our society has gone from. I remember the "Dick Van Dyke" show; Laura and Rob had two separate beds, remember in their bedroom? They slept in separate beds, and you wondered how they had little Ritchie. Then, in this day and age, look at what's on TV or in the movies. We're being flooded by all sorts of immorality out there. I think as Christians, as Catholics, we have to do our best to dress modestly, and also to get our children to do that as well. That's a great question. It's a hard thing to follow, good standards of decency. Just do your best.

(A question). One of your main jobs as parents is to preserve your child's innocence; protect their innocence, and their holiness. You have to be very careful about what you allow your kids to watch. I mean, imagine these parents who allow their kids to go on the Internet without any sort of blocks, or any sort of programs that block out any bad sites. You should never have the Internet in your home without the parental blocks that can keep your kids from getting into any bad things. In this day and age, you have all sorts of bad books, magazines, and Internet web sites. The pornography business is a ten billion dollar a year business. It's just a terrible thing. One holy person said, "If the television show doesn't get you, the commercial will." That's true. You have to be careful. A lot of those commercials are bad too. So, you just have to do your very best to avoid as much TV as possible, and to know what's going to be in the movies. Before you go to them, you can read ahead of time and know what's going to be in there. Just be very careful, especially in taking your kids to some of these things, to make sure they're not exposed to these immoral things.

Pornography is a terrible problem in our society. It really promotes adultery of the heart. Like the husbands to the wives that look at these things, they're actually committing adultery with these other people; not physically, but I guess you could say, emotionally. That tears apart marriages, and there are all sorts of problems with that.

Let me just spend a few minutes talking about the difference between *contraception* and *Natural Family Planning*. I know you had a very good talk the other week about Natural Family Planning, but I'm not sure how much they got

into the difference between contraception and Natural Family Planning. What we should remember is that the marital act is sacred and holy. Remember, when Moses went up on Mount Sinai, God said, "Take your shoes off, for it's holy ground." When we talk about sexuality, sex is not a four-letter word; it's a three-letter word. It's something very sacred, and very holy.

Contraception violates the sacredness of the marriage act, the marital embrace. In the teachings of God, sexuality is for two things: *for love, and life*. It's love-giving and life-giving. When one or both of these are violated, then it renders that act immoral. Just to give you a little analogy, for example, food. Food is similar because there's the pleasure aspect of food. It tastes great, right? There's also a nourishment aspect. It nourishes the body. When one or the other of these gets out of line, it causes problems. For example, in the Roman days, they would have these big feasts, and they would drink and stuff themselves, and commit all sorts of gluttony, and eat and drink as much as they could. Then they would go over to the side to a vomitorium and throw it all up. All they wanted was the pleasure aspect, and they violated this aspect.

This is, for example, things like bulimia or anorexia, you see how, when a person has those diseases, it shows that there's a problem between these two aspects of the nature of food. It's for both the taste, and the pleasure, and the love of eating, but as well as the idea of nourishing the body. We can see that when one of those aspects is violated, either through a disease or through what the Romans did, it shows that it was unnatural; and it violated the very nature of food.

It's the same thing in sexuality. The marriage act between husband and wife is to show love to one's spouse, and to be open to life. If one of these is directly attacked, it renders that act immoral. A good example, let's say, in the case of a king who wanted an heir to the throne, like Henry VIII. Let's say Henry VIII forced himself upon his wife for the sake of having a child, but there was no love there; he just used her as an object to bring about new life. That would be wrong. In the case of a husband, let's say, raping his wife, that's wrong, because you're violating the love aspect, even though it might bring about a life. That action was still wrong, because it violated the love-principle that needed to be there.

Let's say the case where a man rapes a woman in a dark alley. Let's say that action brings about life, but it's still a sin. It violated that principle of love, because that rape violated the very nature of the dignity of that act which should be there. There should always be love there, and there should always be openness to life, or never a violation of the life principle. In contraception, there might be love in that act between husband and wife, but the couple is deliberately violating that principle of life. They're saying that we are going to take steps to make sure that we're having this act, but we're violating the sacredness of that act by bringing in something unnatural: condoms, pills, IUD's, or whatever. Remember, it's not because of the artificiality of something that makes it immoral, because God is

not against artificial things, nor is the Church. The Church is not against contact lenses, pacemakers, or hearing aides. Those things are fine, but they're helpful. They help nature, whereas contraception goes against nature; it's contrary, contraception. It violates the sacredness of the act. Keep that in mind.

What Natural Family Planning does, as it was mentioned, was that you merely abstain during the fertile time of the month, and there's nothing wrong with abstaining. It's always morally acceptable to abstain. It's what a priest does his whole life. With a married couple, it's not wrong to abstain from marital relations during the fertile time of the month. That way, when they come together during the infertile time of the month, that act is still integral; that act is still sacred. Nothing is being violated in that act. They won't be able to conceive a child, because she's not fertile. That act is still integral, and they're not attacking the life-principle or the love-principle when they have relations during the infertile time. That's important to understand the difference.

(A question). Actually, you're coming from an angle that is probably opposite of what a lot of people come from, because some don't understand why they can't use contraception. What you're saying is, it seems in your mind that why even is Natural Family Planning morally acceptable. Shouldn't couples maybe just trust God with their sexuality, and not even abstain during the fertile time?

That's the greatest freedom in marriage, is when couples are completely open to life. They accept the number of children that God gives them. Most couples don't even practice Natural Family Planning; many of them that I know, because they just trust in the Lord. They say that God will provide, which He always does. What they do is, they don't even practice NFP. Because you are right, that Natural Family Planning is really meant to be used for couples that have a serious reason not to have any more children, or not to have a child at a particular time.

Humane Vitae does talk about this though. There are legitimate reasons why a couple can make use of Natural Family Planning, and abstain during the fertile times. There are serious reasons. But it also says legitimate reasons. Some of those reasons could be the physical health of the mother; it could be serious financial reasons; it could be emotional reasons, just being very overburdened, women having children in Iraq right now, living in a war-torn area. In other words, there are legitimate and serious reasons why a couple can use Natural Family Planning to abstain during the fertile times.

Let's say the children are spaced out; they're all 13 months apart, and the mother just needs a break; she just can't handle the kids she's having. So, there are legitimate reasons; that's why a couple can make use of Natural Family Planning – physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial reasons why they can make use of the cycles of fertility and infertility that God has placed in the woman's body. I would just say that couples can make use of NFP. There are legitimate and

serious reasons why they can make use of that, and they are within their moral right to do that. That's how I would answer your question.

There's a difference between not throwing a party and a difference between having a party and telling God, "You're not invited." This is the analogy I would give you. It's not wrong not to have the party. It would be wrong to say, "God, we're having a party, and You are not invited in this act." Contraception is saying, "We're having a party, and God, You're outta here. You're not being invited." There's nothing wrong with just saying, "We're not going to have a party for the next week." There's nothing wrong with abstaining. St. Paul even says husbands and wives abstain for a season, or for a time. So, I would just answer your question that way.

Just to finish up here, some of the other violations of life would be things like:

- Test tube babies
- In-vitro fertilization
- Donor insemination

To get the sperm from another man and inject it into a wife, that's actually a form of adultery, even though there's not a physical coming together of two people that aren't married. To get the sperm of another man who's not the husband, that's a form of adultery; and that's always wrong.

Even test tube babies or in-vitro fertilization is wrong as well, because it is separating the act of love from the conception of new life. It's taking out the conception of a child. Every child has a right to be born in the union of husband and wife, their mother and father, in an act of love, not in a Petri dish, or in a test tube. Keep that in mind.

The other danger is that the way they get the sperm is usually through masturbation, which is a serious sin. So, it's wrong to do in-vitro because of that, plus the fact that they usually conceive about five or six embryos, and then they destroy many of them, and have abortions, killing those little infants. They just save one or two, and they do selective killing on the others. That's why in-vitro fertilization is wrong.

This would show you why, for example, homosexuality is wrong. They say, "Yes, we love each other." But obviously, their act can never bring about new life, because of the homosexuality. That's why self abuse, impure actions, or masturbation is always wrong, because it's not an act of love between spouses, and it's not life-giving. It's wrong in both those counts. Read [The Catechism](#), and what it says about that, to deliberately do that is a serious sin.

Read [The Catechism](#) about this; hopefully, I gave you a little bit of insight on the difference between why Natural Family Planning is morally acceptable in the eyes of God for a couple to use for legitimate or serious reasons, and why

contraception is always intrinsically immoral. Remember, every Protestant religion up until 1930 condemned contraception as serious sin; only the Catholic Church today has remained faithful to the teachings of God on marriage and the Bible.