

- This week we again we see the greatness of John the Baptist.
- John, despite his vast popularity, always points to Christ, knowing that Jesus is truly the one sent from God to give truth.
- We are made for truth, and thus only in truth can we find lasting fulfillment...because truth is from God, and God IS truth.
- That's why Jesus tells us: *"I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me."*
- And because God is truth, the Word of God in scriptures is also truth.

-
- Remembering this, we focus today on our second reading, in which St. Paul stresses avoiding immorality and seeking holiness of body.
 - We are made both body and soul...and at the resurrection we will be continue to be both.
 - God has made us for His purpose—created in holiness to be temples of His Holy Spirit. Thus our bodies truly are not our own, but belong to their Creator. We are stewards of our bodies.
 - And to keep our bodies holy, we must live in accord with God's direction. This is what is truth, and thus true good for us.
 -
 - And so Paul emphasizes avoidance of sexual immorality of body—that which is against the good, and against the design, of God.
 - Because of our limited time in a homily, I recommend you read the Catechism of the Catholic Church, section three, on the Sixth Commandment, which focuses upon this subject.
 - This is very important, because it is in the area of sexuality that people so very often depart from the God's will, and thereby sin.
 -
 - The body is holy, and thus sexuality is holy.
 - The Church is thus certainly not against sexuality, but both the Word of God, and the Church following that Word, teach that sexuality is to be only between husband and wife—man and woman—in legitimate bonds of marriage.
 - THAT is what is holy; THAT is what is good.
 -

- After all...what is sin? Sin is that which we do which goes against the plan, the design, and the direction of God.
- And God declares something as sinful not arbitrarily, but rather because it is harmful in some way—both to the individual and to society—because we are one body of Christ, and what affects one affects all.
- Can a member of a family be harmed and the rest of the family not suffer? We suffer with the family member who suffers.
- Love God, and love thy neighbor. Every sin—and every refusal to sin—touches upon both of those two great commandments.
-
- Therefore, when God forbids fornication—sex between unmarried persons—it is harmful not only to the participants, but to all.
- Indeed, St. Paul writes: *“Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man...has any inheritance in the kingdom ...of God.”* (Eph 5:5 RSV)
- Fornication and sexual sin is condemned throughout the Bible—even by Jesus Himself—who did not diminish the gravity of sexual sin, but rather increased it, and emphasized the need for greater self-control, as when He says: *“You have heard it said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’, but I say to you, whoever looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart”*
-
- Other things of sexual immorality...
- Adultery goes without saying—the 6th commandment specifically condemns it. The harm of adultery is perhaps the most obvious.
- But also pornography and its accompanying lust...which often lead to another grave sin: self-stimulation.
- Pornography leads to the destruction of so many relationships and marriages; it is truly a modern-day scourge to personal sanctity.
- How does it harm? Men prefer images and sin through lust, but it also cultivates for them unrealistic expectations of the female body, leading to disappointment and obsession with images rather than the reality...leading to the destruction of the relationship.
- Women tend more toward narratives, like the current “50 Shades of Gray”, which lead to sin through lust and unrealistic

expectations of fantasy romance from their husbands—who are more likely to plop down on the sofa with a beer to watch football than to be smoldering torrents of romance.

-
- And, finally, and most controversially in our day...homosexual relations are strongly prohibited in scripture—from Genesis to Revelation—as seriously contrary to the plan and desire of God... and, as such, must be destructive to the human person and to human society.
- Does that mean we are to hate homosexuals? Of course not; we are to hate no one. St. John tells us: *“He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still.”* (1Jo 2:9 RSV)
- Many homosexuals do many good things, and those good traits can and should be admired...remembering that it is no sin to BE homosexual; that may lie beyond one’s immediate control.
- Indeed, the Catechism states: *“This inclination...constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity.”*
- What is wrong is not the involuntary inclination, but rather the actions which are gravely against the natural law...as are unmarried heterosexual acts, by the way.
-
- Indeed, many (maybe most) homosexuals wish that they weren’t that way.
- At our last priest convocation in October, the presenting psychologist told us that research is showing more and more that homosexuality is often caused by psychological factors beyond a person’s control, including various factors in childhood.
- These days much of it is simply societal pressure to conform...and youth especially can be confused in that transition from admiration and emulation of the same sex in early childhood to the budding sexual awareness of adolescence...especially in our current culture in which sexuality has re-arisen (as it has periodically throughout the ages) as the idol of our time.
- All this is why Pope Francis said: *“Who am I to judge?”* when asked about homosexuality—not that it the acts aren’t against the

will of God, but rather because we cannot judge the soul...and the person may be sincerely struggling against the temptation.

- This is why the Catechism goes on to say that therefore *“homosexual persons are called to chastity.”*
-
- Certainly homosexuals have had to suffer much hatred and unjust persecution in the past. That hatred is also against the will of God.
- We must remember that they are our brothers and sisters, they are our sons and daughters. They are not “them”; they are “us”.
- And yet again we recall that God seeks only our good, and only prohibits those things which are truly harmful to the human person and to society.
- He created us, and thus knows absolutely what is for our good.
-
- The Church does not hate; on the contrary, she loves...and expresses that love of God and humanity by teaching God’s Word, which is truth... and desires only to shepherd God’s children to holiness...and therefore to God’s grace.
- So in all things and circumstances, let us all seek greater holiness by avoiding any type of immorality in our bodies or minds.
- In sexual temptation, remember that to love is to seek the best for the beloved...and what could be better for them than seeking his/her holiness before God and resisting satisfaction of illicit sexual desire?
- Even St. Thomas Aquinas admits that sexual desire is our strongest temptation...and yet, St. Paul reminds us that we are never tempted beyond our strength.
- And as Paul tells us today: *“...you are not your own... you have been purchased at a price”*, and that price was Jesus’ sacrifice of His own life upon the cross...such is God’s love for us.
-
- Knowing this, let us always be attentive to the Word—the truth—of God...so that we may declare with Samuel as in our first reading: *“Speak, Lord...for your servant is listening.”*

Reading 1

[1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19](#)

Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was. The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, “Here I am.” Samuel ran to Eli and said, “Here I am. You called me.” “I did not call you,” Eli said. “Go back to sleep.” So he went back to sleep. Again the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. “Here I am,” he said. “You called me.” But Eli answered, “I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep.”

At that time Samuel was not familiar with the LORD, because the LORD had not revealed anything to him as yet. The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, “Here I am. You called me.” Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. So he said to Samuel, “Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, “Samuel, Samuel!” Samuel answered, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10](#)

R. (8a and 9a) **Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

I have waited, waited for the LORD,
and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.
And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.

R. **Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

Sacrifice or offering you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;
then said I, “Behold I come.”

R. **Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.**

“In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
to do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!”

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Reading II

[1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20](#)

Brothers and sisters:

The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord,
and the Lord is for the body;
God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?
But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one Spirit with him.

Avoid immorality.

Every other sin a person commits is outside the body,
but the immoral person sins against his own body.

Do you not know that your body
is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you,
whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

For you have been purchased at a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body

Gospel

[Jn 1:35-42](#)

John was standing with two of his disciples,
and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said,

“Behold, the Lamb of God.”

The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus.
Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them,

“What are you looking for?”

They said to him, “Rabbi” — which translated means Teacher —,
“where are you staying?”

He said to them, “Come, and you will see.”

So they went and saw where Jesus was staying,
and they stayed with him that day.

It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter,
was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.

He first found his own brother Simon and told him,
“We have found the Messiah” — which is translated Christ —.

Then he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said,

“You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas” — which is translated Peter.