

Human sexuality is a holy gift to the human person from God. It is special power that allows one to experience the love of God in various ways. Human sexuality shows forth the love of God between a man and a woman and it allows them to participate in the act of God's creation. Known as procreation, this is a beautiful blessing that brings new life into the world. Unfortunately, many people distort this gift, deny its value, and consequently deny the value of a human person. However, this noble view can be redeemed by recognizing the value of the human person. Once this is done, one will see proof of the great value of God's gift. Respect for the unborn and the dignity of a human being through the virtue of chastity can help one to respect their sexual gifts.

The respect that the value of an unborn baby demands shows the value of human sexuality. Contraception and abortion, two of the greatest evils of modern times, explicitly deny the value of an embryo. Not only does it destroy innocent life, but it also separates the unitive and procreative parts of sexuality.<sup>1</sup> It says that the procreative part is optional and that the child is a burden or an obstacle instead of a blessing from God.<sup>2</sup> Following this belief, sexuality itself is then degraded, since one is withholding a full gift of themselves from the other.<sup>3</sup> Sexuality's procreative, life-giving meaning is destroyed. On the other hand, the value of sexuality can be seen when one realizes the value of an unborn baby. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Butler, Jason Evert, and Crystalina Evert, *YOU: Life, Love, and the Theology of the Body* (West Chester, PA: Ascension Publishing Group, 2016), 109.

<sup>2</sup> Butler and Evert, *YOU*, 129.

<sup>3</sup> Butler and Evert, *YOU*, 109.

states, a child is “the supreme gift of marriage.”<sup>4</sup> It is “to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception.”<sup>5</sup> A child is the result of the love of the “one-flesh union” between a man and a woman and their union of love with God.<sup>6</sup> One is able to cooperate with the will of God in his creative work and bring a human life into the world.<sup>7</sup> Through respecting the infinite value that an embryo truly has, one can come to respect the infinite value of sexuality, as this gift has the power to create a human person.

Furthermore, respect for the dignity of the human person through the virtue of chastity opens one’s eyes to the true dignity of sexuality. When the gift of sexuality is used incorrectly, the human person is reduced to a thing to be used. A person is simply a means to achieve pleasure.<sup>8</sup> Instead of giving a “free, total, faithful, and fruitful gift of themselves” to each other, a man and a woman are simply using the other person for their own sake.<sup>9</sup> Thus, this degrades the dignity of the human person, as their value is reduced to that of an object. However, when sexuality is used according to God’s design and Will, the man and the woman are elevated to dignity. Through chastity, the virtue that “helps us to order our sexual desires according to our own dignity and that of others,” one can come to respect another’s dignity and love them through

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<sup>4</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994. para. 2378.

<sup>5</sup> CCC, 1994. para. 2378.

<sup>6</sup> Butler and Evert, *YOU*, 129.

<sup>7</sup> Butler and Evert, *YOU*, 129.

<sup>8</sup> Butler and Evert, *YOU*, 55.

<sup>9</sup> Butler and Evert, *YOU*, 108.

a pure, total, and sacrificial gift of oneself.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, when one is aware of this truth, the immense dignity of sexuality will be unveiled. Rather than simply just a pleasurable activity, sexuality will be seen for what it truly is: a holy, intimate union of love between a husband and wife.<sup>11</sup> Through the virtue of chastity, the true meaning of sexuality can be revealed to the human person.

Through respecting the unborn and respecting others through the virtue of chastity, one can come to know the true meaning and value of their sexual gifts. Realizing the infinite value of an embryo, the result of procreation, can restore one to a holy view of sexuality. The beauty of a child will prove to one the beauty of the procreative element of sexuality. In addition, respecting the dignity of others reveals the true meaning of the gift of sexuality: love between a husband and wife. Through chastity, one is able to obtain and understand this. As one comes to know these truths, he or she can grow in a deeper respect and understanding of his or her sexual powers; a beautiful gift from God.

## Bibliography

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<sup>10</sup> Butler and Evert, *YOU*, 49-55.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. Edward J. Hayes, Rev. Msgr. Paul J. Hayes, and James J. Drummey, *Catholicism and Life*, (Norwood, MA: C.R. Publications, 1996), 100.