

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Exodus 20: 1 - 17 VI. You shall not commit adultery	Deuteronomy 5: 6 - 21 VI. You shall not commit adultery
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Last week we looked at the vocation to chastity and the Sixth Commandment. We discovered that the vocation to chastity is for all lifestyles. Today we shall look more in depth at this vocation. Section 2339 states: "Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom." We need to use other words to better understand this statement. The words 'apprenticeship' and 'training' imply that we are not perfect. There is something of a trial-and-error approach to chastity. Think about a young couple who are dating for the first time. What areas of affection are acceptable and what areas are not acceptable within the realms of the vocation to chastity? We can give the general precept of safeguarding personal unity but will that safeguard have the same limits and allowances for everyone? We can certainly identify some actions as clearly within the limits of the vocation to chastity and some others as clearly beyond the limits of the vocation to chastity. For example, holding hands, a goodnight kiss, dinner, a movie, and some dances provide a young couple with the necessary opportunities to get to know each other and to determine their suitability for marriage. On the other hand arranged marriages impose a terrible burden on a young couple especially if they never meet until the wedding day. We do not want a young man and young woman to marry without first getting to know each other, their families, the history of each individual, and the hopes for the future that each person has in his or her heart. But, the idea of a trial cohabitation goes against the commitment inherent in the love of marriage. All marriages will experience trials and storms. Cohabitation does not solve problems but creates problems. So where should a young dating couple draw the line? Should the young girl be interested in making herself look physically attractive? Should the young man visit the gym more often? How expensive a gift should they buy for each other on birthdays and holi-days? Too little affection will keep them as strangers. Too much affection can lead to severe temptation. The term 'self-mastery' includes room for individuality. Section 2341 states: "The virtue of chastity comes under the cardinal virtue of temperance, which seeks to permeate the passions and the appetites of the senses with reason." This statement is dangerous in that our idea of reasonable comes under the influence of each culture. Many movies today would never have been permitted by society years ago. We will need to read section 2340 to find a solution to the problem of cultural influences.