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THE QUEEN'S WORK

# How to Give SEX INSTRUCTIONS

A GUIDE  
FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS  
and Others Responsible  
for the  
TRAINING of YOUNG PEOPLE

by  
P. J. BRUCKNER, S. J.

With a  
FOREWORD  
by  
DANIEL A. LORD, S. J.



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St. Louis 18, Missouri



## FOREWORD

Here is the booklet for which thousands of people have been waiting. Simply, honestly, in clear and straightforward fashion this book explains how adults may present to young people the essential facts of life and its origin. It offers the proper approach to the subject and supplies not only the manner but the exact words in which the essential knowledge of sex may be given to children and young people.

There is no doubt about the need for such a booklet. We have been asked for it time and time again. Sodality convention delegates who work with young people and who regret that so much of the knowledge of sex is gutter-learned have asked for a booklet which would explain how to tell children the beautiful truth about sex. Many parents have asked for such a booklet.

"We are more than willing to tell our children what they should know. But we simply don't know how to tell them. We approach the subject but draw back in despair. How can we tell them about it without shocking them? Should we be mysterious and solemn or offhand and casual? What are the simple words with which to explain the somewhat complicated facts? We are anxious to do our duty, but no one has taught us how."

This inability to handle the problem of instructing young people has been the chief obstacle in the way of presenting sex instruction as the Church approves it and the Holy Father wishes it. Those who should instruct children — parents, priests, religious teachers dealing with individual souls — are more than anxious to do their duty. They see the evil that comes when children learn "the facts of life" from the evil tongues of associates. They know how much harm is done when a false start twists and warps a whole attitude toward life.

"But how can I make all this clear? What are the words? What form should the instructions take?"

Father Bruckner has, we believe, answered these questions splendidly. He details in this booklet a complete method by which the properly constituted guides of young people may describe life's beautiful origin to their charges.

The booklet is intended for adults. Should it however fall into the hands of a young person, it will do no harm. Indeed the last two sections, the model talks to a boy and to a girl, could be given to a child to read, though these talks would come much better from the lips of someone else, someone the child trusts.

The viewpoint throughout the booklet is Catholic. After all the Catholic Church presents the sanest and soundest and most wholesome view on the whole matter of life. She is the chief guardian of purity, as she is the great champion of marriage and the home. And her viewpoint on sex should be accepted by any decent man or woman, Catholic or non-Catholic. Anyone who has a right attitude toward marriage and respect for life will find the method and matter of this booklet precisely what he (or she, for the duty of sex instruction must often fall on a woman) has been seeking.

We offer this booklet to parents with a sincere desire that it may be of real benefit to them. We feel convinced that priests, religious teachers, and all others entrusted with the instruction of young people will be grateful for the intelligence and calm sanity of its presentation and its delicate mastery of the whole field of sex instruction. Many an adult who has turned in instinctive revulsion from the animalism and vulgarity that characterize so much sex instruction will find the treatment offered here singularly wholesome and refreshing.

May the booklet serve the purity of youth and the whole essential field of marriage, children, and the home.

DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.



# EDUCATING A CHILD IN PURITY

## A TALK TO PARENTS

### *Changing Attitude Toward Child Education*

Our traditional reticence concerning sex is rapidly disappearing. We are living in an atmosphere entirely different from that in which our parents moved. Formerly it was considered almost a crime to tell young children how they came into the world. That point of view has disappeared under the pressure of a new drive among educators, doctors, and others who desire to help parents rear children in a more scientific way.

You are well aware of the modern efforts directed toward preserving the child's health. Our parents thought it silly to have children examined in school by a doctor or a nurse. Our parents laughed at these "new-fangled" ideas of rearing babies according to detailed medical instruction, of taking children to medical clinics for examination, of reading numerous magazines which offer instructions in the health-care of children.

But modern mothers seek out such information and guidance to aid them in their motherly duties. And there is a widespread campaign today to have mothers and fathers instruct their children regarding purity and sex. A great number of parents have already followed the advice of teachers and doctors in this matter.

### *The Catholic Attitude Toward Sex Education*

But are Catholic teachers and doctors joining in this campaign? Are priests interested in it? Does the Church favor such education? The answer is yes and no. Catholic educators are wholeheartedly in favor of sex instruction in the home, but they insist that the instruction be truly Catholic in tone. Many parents are agreeing with these educators and following their advice. The successes of these parents in this matter are bringing other mothers and fathers to this course of action. When parents realize the beauty of purity as it is expressed by the Catholic Church, all their difficulties vanish and they are glad, even eager, to give these beautiful ideas to their children.

### *Meeting Modern Conditions*

The world today is seemingly sex-mad. Newspapers, magazines, movies, advertisements, even people you meet—all seem obsessed with the notion of sex. Sin has come to mean



only sex sin. "Emancipation" and "freedom" in current jargon mean only sex emancipation, sex freedom. Naturally you worry about the future of your youngsters; you wonder whether or not they will be contaminated by the rot that surrounds them.

Indeed you have reason to be afraid. You want to rear your children correctly, to give them the best of everything; you want them above all to be pure. But your children are tempted by the world. Can they be pure when they see suggestive posters and dangerous movies? They are not old enough to know that advertisers and movie magnates often appeal to our fallen nature, to the animal desires within us. These men know the weaknesses inherent in us and do not hesitate to exploit them. And you try to shield your children from all this. But can you?

Your children are also tempted from within. They are curious about sex matters, yet they feel that there is something shameful about the whole thing. They hear their companions make nasty remarks, remarks which burn in their minds and arouse cravings. Even little children, you know, have consciences. And too often they are not sure whether or not they have yielded to these cravings.

And even while the child is tortured by these things, his parents think he is entirely ignorant of all that pertains to sex. Priests often hear mothers boast, "Thank God, my child knows nothing of evil." And priests know this is often a false judgment. For a child is at the mercy of the world unless those who love him instruct and train him in purity.

Frequently you watch your boy or girl and wonder what he or she is thinking about. At a Kansas Sodality convention attended by fifteen hundred young people ranging in age from fourteen to twenty years, boys and girls spoke of their personal problems. The common complaint was that their parents did not understand them, did not try to solve their difficulties.

"Our fathers and mothers aren't our pals," they complained. "Why don't they give us helpful suggestions? Why don't they allow us to entertain at home? And since they don't make our homes attractive for us," they argued, "why should they object to our running around at night?"

It was evident that these young people wanted to do the right thing. But their parents were not doing much to help them.



A college man once said to a priest: "It was a rotten book that I had to turn to for the information which should have come from my parents. I don't blame my parents. They thought they were doing their duty in the matter. But I've often deplored their false ideas of modesty, which prevented them from speaking openly to me on matters of sex. When they failed to do so, they spoiled the best years of my youth."

If this were your boy, how could you explain your conduct to him?

### *Your Own Experience*

Perhaps you often look back on your past experiences for guides in the handling of difficult home situations. You wish to train your youngsters as you were trained; you want even to improve on the methods your parents used. Perhaps your memories of your youth and adolescence teach you that evil arises most often from ignorance. When an evil action became a habit, you suddenly awoke to the realization of evil and said, "Why this is wrong!" Yet you were too shy to talk about it. You felt there were some things about which one should not talk; they were coarse.

Perhaps your parents did not instruct you properly. If they had done so, you would have been aware of the distinction between right and wrong. But you were not made aware of this distinction, and you suffered. Won't you help your youngsters escape that suffering? Can you afford to let your children, uninstructed, run the risk of terrible dangers?

### *Why the Silence of Parents?*

It is the duty of the father and the mother to instruct the child. You admit this, but you say, "I hate to talk about sex to my children." Precisely because you hate to talk of these things, you are the right person to do it. You are just the one to deal with the matter. You yourself are sensitive, modest, and you will teach your children to be modest. Others less sensitive might blight the delicate flower of innocence in the soul of your child. You, because of your love, will nourish this tender plant with pure ideals, Catholic ideals.

You will admit then that it is your serious duty to teach your children the things they ought to know. Still you flinch from the duty. Why let the fact that you dislike that duty deter you? Dislike of a duty is never a sensible reason for side-stepping it. You are justly angry when you see



other mothers and fathers letting their children "run wild," spoiling them hopelessly. "They aren't doing their duty," you storm.

Routing yourself out of bed on a cold morning is no pleasure. But would your employer waste much time with you if you pleaded that "it was too cold to get up on time"? Most of us dislike burdensome duties; but living brings duties, and we must drive ourselves to fulfill them. So in this matter of sex instruction the father or the mother must instruct the child. Parents are appointed by God to train the child.

No doubt every priest in the confessional has had a girl come to him on the eve of her marriage and say, "I want to know what marriage means." And if the priest tells her to ask her mother, the reply usually is, "But my mother sent me to you. I wouldn't think of talking to her about such things. She is much too good. It would hurt her."

### *Shirking?*

No, it is not goodness that prevents a mother or a father from explaining these things to a child. Rather is it false modesty, which should not exist between child and parents. The question is simply this: From whom is the child to learn these things? The priest is not unwilling to shoulder this burden. But the priest knows that these facts should come from the parents. Children who are not instructed by their parents too often learn the facts of sex from lips that speak these facts in vulgar jest. Do you want to hear your youngsters repeating to each other what some older companions told them as a clumsy, unclean joke? Or would you rather speak to your children yourself in a serious, pure way?

It is a strange fact that parents who insist strongly on good table manners and good deportment may neglect this most important matter of sex instruction. The little lies that children tell, the disobedience, the small thefts—these are rarely mortal sins. Sins of impurity however are almost always mortal. It is no exaggeration to say that many of the youngsters now in hell are there because of sins of impurity.

### *The Catholic Explanation Is Simple and Beautiful*

Parents have said, "I teach my children by letting them have pets; from the animals they take care of they will learn all they need to know." This attitude is seriously mistaken. Too many children come to believe that sex is some-



thing purely animal. Teach them, not that it is an animal thing, but that it is a beautiful thing, so beautiful that Christ guarded it with a sacrament. Teach them as Christ would have taught them.

He would have spoken to them of God's desire to people heaven with His children, of themselves fashioned after the image of God. Christ would have told the little ones around His knees that, though He was born of a virgin, He came into the world as other men come, that He was the blessed fruit of Mary's womb. Why that is one of the first prayers your children learn from your lips: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." Have you in this taught your child something indecent? And if it is not indecent, won't you explain what it means?

Indeed your explanation will create confidence and mutual trust between you and your children. Your children will come to realize that you are their best friends and their safest advisers in this matter as in others.

Sex then becomes for them, not a shameful, mysterious thing, but a beautiful and a glorious thing. Your children will admire you for having unveiled it to them as the splendid, God-given thing it is.

One mother who has six children ranging in age from eight to sixteen years instructed them all, even the youngest, in the facts of birth. When she was asked how the children received this instruction, she replied: "The children were satisfied. Those who had been troubled at all before became calm and soon forgot the whole matter."

### *When to Instruct*

Frequently parents, though eager to instruct their children regarding sex and purity, are puzzled about the proper time for this instruction. That is an important question. Should parents wait until the boy is fourteen years old before instructing him fully? Or should instruction be given in small doses from the time he is five years old until he is fifteen? The only safe rule seems to be that each child must be studied individually and given the information first when curiosity prompts him to ask questions and second when his physical development calls for it.

You will be wise to give all the information needed, so that the child will not be helpless when the physical and the mental changes of adolescence come upon him or when he is given distorted information. Certainly it is better to



give the child instruction a year too soon than one hour too late.

### *Answering the Child's Questions*

If you have won the confidence of your children by kindness, by sympathetic understanding and love, they will come to you with all their questions. Children's curiosity is legitimate; they have a right to the correct viewpoint on sex. If you do not scold or "shush" them but instead very frankly and truthfully answer their innocent questions from the beginning and encourage them to bring their troubles to you, they will gradually get all the knowledge they need before puberty comes. This method protects children from wrong notions which they might pick up from companions and strengthens them when they are tempted against purity.

In general then you would do well to instruct your children concerning birth when they first ask about it. Further instruction concerning marriage and other sex matters should be given before puberty. This commonly comes earlier in girls than in boys. All this will be more fully explained later in this booklet.

### *Who Should Instruct?*

The pitiful story of one girl is an example of what mental torture many youngsters endure. Her mother had protected her from impurity in every way. On the way home from school one day a companion told her in a vile, coarse way about the mysteries of generation. The girl was shocked and, rushing home, told her mother what she had heard. Her mother said, harshly, "You are talking about things that children should never mention. Children sin mortally when they talk about such things."

The girl's heart was almost broken at her mother's stern reproach. Bewildered, confused, she wondered about the truth of the matter. She could not throw off the feeling of shame and guilt, yet she was afraid to tell her mother of her anxiety. Gradually she drew apart from her mother, failed to confide in her, became melancholy. So suspicious was she of her parents that her youthful years were spoiled.

Later, after she had learned the Catholic truth of the matter, she forgave her mother. Her mother, she explained, had meant well and, in following her policy of silence and harshness, had done what she believed to be her duty. Yet this false policy of silence had destroyed the girl's youthful



cheerfulness and happiness and had amassed only sad memories of a mother's mistaken love.

### *At First*

In this matter of instructing a child the first plunge is the hardest. You are afraid before you begin. But once you get started, the rest is easy. It is like the "Monday morning" feeling that follows a pleasant Sunday. You see the day's work ahead, and it is not at all pleasant in anticipation; it would be far more pleasant to stay in bed. Yet when you rout yourself out with a will and throw yourself into your daily routine, your repugnance vanishes and you accomplish your tasks cheerfully.

Once you break the ice and begin to instruct the child regarding sex and purity, you will find your self-confidence increasing. When the instruction is finished, you will smile at yourself for having feared it. Your children's gratitude and your own peace of mind will be the pleasant rewards for your having overcome your initial fears.

### *How Shall I Instruct?*

It was mentioned before that success in this matter depends chiefly on your winning the confidence of your children by sympathetic kindness. They should be trained to come to you with all their difficulties, great and small. If they know you are interested in them and if they trust you implicitly, they will ask you questions from which most children shrink. It is highly important that you do not scold them about their little troubles. Do not make light of a child's difficulty, even if that difficulty be slight; for if you do scold, he will not come to you with his serious difficulties. Remember that youngsters take all their troubles seriously; you did when you were young.

To win their confidence, make yourself a child again. Put yourself in their place. Think back over your own experience in these matters, and you will find a surprising sympathy well up within you.

In the first place explain that sex problems are normal, that everyone has such problems, and that every boy and every girl goes through similar trials. You see, the boy thinks he is the only one in the world who is troubled about sex. And he heaves a sigh of relief when he learns that others undergo this experience. He feels that he is no longer alone in the matter and is therefore convinced that he is normal.



Do not be shocked when they question you. Be quiet and serious when they talk to you. This puts youngsters at their ease. And it gives them a healthy attitude toward the things of sex. *How* the thing is said is as important as *what* is said. Give the information naturally and spontaneously. Youngsters are extremely sensitive to your tone of voice. Hence make your voice serious, kindly, sympathetic, reverent. Your words should border on the matter-of-fact, yet they should be tempered with a sense of the sacred. Your tone should not betray nervousness or embarrassment; above all it should not be clouded with the hush of mystery.

May a warning be inserted here? Never betray any suspicions you may have that your children are forming impure habits. Watch your children, and if you do discover such habits in them, be tactful, clever, diplomatic about them. Convinced of the existence of such habits, you should warn the children about them, but do it in an indirect way. For instance if you know they are tampering with themselves in a dangerous way, say, "I wonder whether you have ever heard that touching yourself immodestly is wrong; boys and girls get into such habits sometimes."

Or the father could say, "Have you heard how so-and-so, the All-American football star, trained himself?" Or, "Have you been to confession recently? It's the best way to keep your soul clean." If indirect and tactful hints are not sufficient to stop a seriously bad habit, you must of course take direct means to stop it.

### *Ask Questions*

Once you have the confidence of your children, you can draw them out by asking a few leading questions. Ask them whether or not they have observed certain things—for example, physical changes in their bodies. This gives them a chance to talk to you and to let you know what they have been thinking about. The fact that they are spontaneous in talking to you is of course the best opportunity for your purposes. If they never ask or talk about sex matters, never force them to do so. Lead up to the matter in an indirect way. Helps in the form of questions will be found at the end of the outlines of each discussion.

Once your children have been instructed correctly, you will find that your worries over the problem of purity have vanished and that your children have a new respect and love for you.



## *What Shall I Say and Do?*

Before going into particulars, let us try to visualize the whole field of child education. You make it your business to care for your child's health; you train him to care for himself. But you are more concerned for the health of your child's soul. You consider it your chief duty before God to do your utmost to protect and train that soul.

Now sex education is an ultimate part of a child's training. It is not an isolated piece of knowledge, something to be held apart as mysterious, veiled. It fits into the whole scheme of your child's education. In giving sex instruction, you are explaining how God made us and how we fit into His creation. For a child to be curious is really not unusual. He wants to know—and he has a right to know—how he came into this world, why he is in the world, where he is going and how to get there. He wants to know the nature and purpose of these sex powers.

Sex is so intimate a part of man that he is driven to think about it instinctively. It is not evil; it is blessed. God looked upon it and said that it was good. It is only when we use our bodies for purposes other than those for which they were intended by God that we sin. He made our bodies, and He has the right to tell us how to use them. And a child must be taught the difference between the right and the wrong use of his body.

### *Linked*

Educating for purity of mind and imagination also has an important place in the complete education of children. You rightfully demand obedience from them in small duties. You insist that they do their school work well in order that they may develop sharp, clear minds. Above all you want them to have pure minds. You want them to be modest and to have self-control. This precisely is the chief element in training for purity.

A child must be trained to self-denial in his sex instincts, just as he must be trained to self-control at table. If he overeats, he will suffer for it. If he abuses his body, he will also suffer, perhaps for eternity. He must control himself by that marvelous power of will within him.

Sulkiness and anger are not removed by a command from father or mother. But when a child is led out of such tempers by a kindly talk on the attractiveness of cheerfulness and meekness, and when he comes to see his tempers



as temptations that grip and hurt him, he will use his own will to "snap himself out of it."

You cannot compel a child to be pure. But you can present the beauties of purity so attractively that he will gladly deny himself many things to achieve that purity. Cleverly you tell your youngster that if he rakes the lawn he may have a slice of that fresh cake. How the leaves fly!

### *Ideals*

Similarly he will work hard to be pure if you present purity's splendor and beauty appealingly. Boys want to excel in sports. Fathers can point out that all famous athletes train for many weeks and months before contests, and that purity makes for strength and endurance. Boys want to be manly, courageous, pure — not quitters, weaklings. Purity demands training in bravery, the overcoming of rotten thoughts, the avoidance of cowardly actions.

Girls are idealistic. They love to be called "little mothers." They are hungry for motherhood. Present the beauties of motherhood in glowing colors. The little pains they endure now, their hard-won victories over wrong desires prepare them for the future glories of motherhood.

If you show your children that self-conquest is noble, you will make their hearts glow with enthusiasm for the battle against impurity. They feel that they are "getting the jump" on their fallen nature, and they love a fight. And when temptation comes, they will despise it and conquer it.

### *Self-control*

One wise mother trained her son to abstain from eating candy between meals and showed him how to deny himself in other little ways. The boy took great pride in developing self-control. It helped him to master a particularly unruly temper. That same boy was later grateful for that training when a woman tempted him to grave impurity. He said that his earlier training in self-denial turned him almost automatically from the temptation.

A soldier who went through World War I, who spent years in the French Foreign Legion and lived in the vice-infested cities of the East claims that he kept his purity unspotted because his father had frequently told him that a man who gives in to impurity hasn't any backbone.

There is a very close connection between self-denial and purity. Perhaps you will not see and enjoy immediate



results from training your children to purity. But what a thrill will come to you when years from now your son or your daughter (perhaps married, but still "your boy" and "your girl") thanks you for having trained him or her to self-denial.

### *Instructing Younger Children*

Children up to eight or ten years of age may be instructed about birth, especially when they ask about it. Then it is easy for a mother to say, in simple words like these:

"Dear, I bore you nine months in my body, under my heart. This caused me much worry. I thought of you all the time and prayed for you. Then when I brought you into the world, I suffered a great deal of pain. The Blessed Virgin also carried the Child Jesus in her womb; that is why we pray, 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus'."

### *Mortal Sin? Venial Sin? No Sin at All?*

Children up to eight or ten years of age need to be trained in modesty, and every mother must take care that they are trained in it. In the matter of impurity however it is highly important that parents know clearly the difference between mortal and venial sin. For often enough a child's troubled conscience must be set at rest. There are certain acts that are not at all sinful. Thus one can hardly help looking at or touching oneself when bathing or undressing. Such acts are perfectly natural and promote health and cleanliness.

### *Difference*

But to look at or touch sexual organs out of curiosity is usually a venial sin. And often such touching or examining is the occasion of mortal sin. One is guilty of a mortal sin of impurity when one *wants* to do these things or *does* them for the forbidden sexual pleasure derived. The word "forbidden" refers to the fact that these pleasures are perfectly legitimate in marriage but are absolutely forbidden outside of marriage.

Modesty is the wall thrown around purity; neglect of modesty breaks down this wall and puts one in the occasion of sin. But if we know from past experience that we are likely to fall, we are not permitted to place ourselves in the occasion of sin except for a grave reason. If there is no great danger in the occasion, there is no serious sin. Thus a child who out of curiosity unnecessarily touches his body is ordinarily in no serious danger of mortal sin, but he



exposes himself willingly to the danger and therefore commits a venial sin. But if he tampers with himself to derive forbidden pleasure, he commits a mortal sin of impurity.

### *Danger*

A concrete example may serve to make clear the difference between mortal and venial sin in the matter of purity. Suppose your next-door neighbors were quarantined for measles. You forbid your children to go near the house because they will be in danger of contracting the disease. Now if they *want* to get the measles so they can stay away from school, they will go next door and play with the quarantined children. This is similar to their *wanting* forbidden sexual pleasure and tampering with themselves to get it; in the latter case it would be a mortal sin of impurity.

But if your children are merely curious to see what their quarantined playmates look like, they may take a chance and just visit them for a minute. They have no desire to contract the disease. The same analysis holds in a child's looking at or touching himself out of curiosity — and this would be at most a venial sin.

Again the thought of the *pleasure* of seeing his chums and of playing with them once more might attract your youngster so strongly that he will go next door. You know this is dangerous for him because, if he yields to the desire of being with his quarantined chums, he probably will not break away but will stay to enjoy the pleasure of playing with them and will contract the disease. Such is the case with forbidden pleasure: Its attraction is so strong that, once a youngster begins, it is almost impossible for him to stop.

At first there is no grave sin; it is merely pleasant to look or to feel. But even if a youngster stops immediately after yielding, he commits a venial sin. Generally however he *cannot stop* after he has yielded even for a moment, and he goes on to commit a mortal sin.

### *Good Reason*

Let us continue the comparison. Not everyone is forbidden to enter the quarantined house. Those who have *good reason* to enter may or even must do so. Thus the doctor and the nurse must enter to take care of the sick children. But both take precautions not to contract the disease or spread it. Likewise the performance of acts that promote health and cleanliness is *necessary* and therefore not even venially sinful.



If your youngster said, "I don't care whether or not I get the measles," you would be worried, for then you would know he would grow careless and run the danger of contracting the disease. The same holds for impure actions: The youngster might think he could tamper with himself and "get away with it." If he does think so, he has bad will and is placing himself in danger of committing sins of impurity, that is, he is putting himself in the *proximate occasion of mortal sin*, itself a serious sin.

### *Clear Ideas*

It is extremely important to have very clearly in mind this distinction between mortal and venial sin. Often parents are responsible for their children's having false consciences; such parents tell their children that certain actions which as a matter of fact are either venial sins or no sins at all are mortal sins. The punishment for mortal sin is, as you well know, hell; and if a child deliberately performs an act that he thinks is a mortal sin, he will be judged and punished for it as mortal, even though the act be only a venial sin.

Not only should a child be taught this difference, but he should be instructed as to what is no sin at all. For instance a parent might say: "You don't commit a sin if after you begin to think about bad things you catch yourself and say, 'I don't *want* to think about such things, and I don't *want* to do such things.' You do not commit a sin if you do not know that what you are doing is wrong. Thus when you see a baby do something wrong, you say, 'He doesn't know any better.' If you are thinking about something that you know is wrong, yet you don't *want* to do the thing, then you do not sin.

"Remember too that sometimes you must look at or touch certain parts of your body: for instance, when you dress or bathe or do what is required for cleanliness or to stop a hurt or an itch. Such acts are not sins, for they are necessary."

### *Models*

Your chief work with young children then is to give them clear ideas of the nature of sin and to help them fight their temptations. All that we have said about inspiring your children to be pure applies here. Lead them to self-denial by presenting the beauties of purity and modesty. Make it a game for them, a fighting game to conquer the impurities that will hurt them and stain their souls.



Point out to them models of purity. For girls the Little Flower is a fascinating ideal; the child Mary attracts them; St. Agnes, St. Cecilia, a modest playmate, a beloved nun—these are only a few of the many models of purity you will find.

For boys the boy Christ is a highly attractive model. Famous athletes (numerous examples can be found in the sports world to prove that success comes from training and failure comes from lack of self-control), the Knights of Arthur, St. Stanislaus Kostka, St. Aloysius will also serve you for this purpose. Do not hold up a playmate as a model—boys dislike this. Best of all be models yourselves.

A prayer that has helped innumerable boys and girls to conquer temptation is: "O Mary, my queen, my mother, keep me and guard me as thy property and possession."

### *Holy Communion*

Without a doubt Holy Communion is the chief help that the Church puts at your disposal in this business of educating your children to purity. Many believe that Pope Pius X decreed that this glorious sacrament be given to the little children of Christ to help them in their battle for purity. Our age is a "soft" age. When you were children, you had luxuries your parents did not have when they were children, and your children have even more than you had. Circumstances forced upon you as a child many tasks which do not exist today. Perhaps your room was cold when you awoke in the morning; perhaps you had to walk miles to school, bring in coal and wood for the fire, and do all the chores that were common fifteen or twenty years ago.

Of course wise parents still see to it that their children do little jobs about the house: The boy takes care of the yard; the girl does housework. Athletics in these days are also a splendid natural help. But generally youth today has a much easier time than you had. Pope Pius X foresaw all this and gave children the supernatural safeguard of frequent Communion, the bread of the strong.

See that your child receives this spiritual bread to strengthen his soul. Encourage him to love Christ as a friend. Lead him to the one spotless friend to whom he can speak of everything, the friend who will treasure his secrets, who will teach him the ways of the clean of heart. Let him see Holy Communion as the basis of all real friendship. For Christ came to give us life and strength, to lift us from the



sin in which we all began, to draw us to Himself by the inspiration of His friendship, by the power of His love.

### *Children Between the Ages of Eight and Fourteen*

What helps can be suggested for children between the ages of eight and fourteen?

The ages mentioned are of course only approximate. A girl may come to puberty before she is thirteen or fourteen years old, and children may be severely tempted before the age of eight. You must watch the growth of each child and give helps accordingly.

During this period it is above all necessary to win and keep the child's confidence. Boys will boast to their companions, "My dad is my pal." And a girl is proud of the mother who is her chum. Such a spirit of friendship is ideal, for it enables you to impart instruction easily, and the child will ask spontaneously about things that bother him. Moreover you can give tips on temptation, tips that will be received gladly and seriously.

It is worth your while to repeat to your children some of the instructions you gave them when they were younger; now that they are older, they will better understand the ideas of temptation and impurity. Emphasize the nature of a mortal sin of impurity; distinguish between what is and what is not sin. Remember, those acts which they do not know are wrong or which are necessary are not sinful. Only when they *want* to enjoy an action that they know is wrong or when they *want* to retain an impure thought in their mind do they sin mortally.

### *Companions*

The parents' problem of companions for their children is always a difficult one. The interest youngsters have in their friends often keeps them out of trouble. Children do not usually resent being told not to associate with certain other children. Neither do they always have to know why you recommend a change of companions. Your children will be impressed when you tell them to associate with children of their own age and of good character. There is nothing to be gained and much to be lost if their companions are of the "silly" or of the "jellyfish" type. And it is better for your youngsters not to associate too closely with children a good deal older than themselves—unless you are sure these older children are of good character.



### *Should the Child Be Given a Book on Sex?*

Just a few words about books on sex instruction. Most books of this type are not adapted to the child's physical and mental status and do not have the Catholic viewpoint, which is the only true viewpoint. Sex-instruction books that have diagrams or pictures should never be given to a youngster. It is best to ask the advice of your pastor or a Catholic teacher about such books. And even should a book be recommended, the youngster should be permitted to read only such parts of it as are suited to his age, physical and mental. (A list of books for parents and of reading matter suited to the ages of various children will be found on the back cover of this book.) It is taken for granted that parents take an interest in and supervise all the books their children read.

### *Confession and Communion*

Many of us find it difficult to confess our sins. Youngsters are no exceptions. They find it very hard to confess sins of impurity; their sense of shame is often almost overpowering. Sometimes they begin confession by telling their minor sins, putting off confession of their sins of impurity, and then become so frightened that they omit the telling of these sins. Advise them that if they tell their worst sins first the rest will be easy. Assure them that the priest has heard confessions of similar sins and understands the temptations of young people; that the priest is bound under pain of mortal sin and excommunication never to reveal any of the sins he has heard in confession; that the priest takes the place of Christ, who is willing to bear men's sins on His shoulders.

Remind them how relieved they feel once confession is over. Confession is like a spiritual bath, refreshing and soothing. Urge your youngsters to ask the priest for advice on any difficulties they may have about purity. The priest is always willing to help.

Give your youngsters every possible encouragement to receive Holy Communion frequently. Recall to them the reasons why Pope Pius X permitted and urged Holy Communion for very young children. Tell them that the strength derived from this spiritual food nourishes us even when we are not aware of it; do all in your power to win them to a close relationship with Christ.

### *Positive Ideals — A Challenge*

Both boys and girls from ten to fourteen years of age are sensitive to idealistic motives. The boy's enthusiasm for



sports increases; the girl enters the romantic stage, the "dreamy" age. The suggestions given on previous pages concerning models of purity can be applied here to arouse enthusiasm in your children. They love to be challenged to the high ideal of purity. Dare them to strive for it.

Wholesome too are the motives of disgust and fear. You can make them feel disgust for impurity by giving them homely illustrations such as: "You wouldn't cover your face with dirt, would you? Well impure people do just that to their souls." You might refer in a casual way to the terrible venereal diseases, often punishments for impurity. This however should be kept in mind: Sins of impurity rarely lead to insanity and do not always lead to disease.

Fear of hell is always a strong motive for a youngster. When the noble ideal of purity pales before strong temptation, only the fear of hell and its eternity of punishment can keep us from sin. It sometimes takes a strong motive to keep youngsters out of sin, and a just fear is good for them.

### *The Age of Puberty*

Just when boys and girls undergo the physical and mental changes of puberty, the changes which indicate that the boy is growing into manhood and the girl into womanhood, cannot be definitely stated. Boys usually undergo these changes in their fourteenth year; girls mature earlier. You must study each child individually. Note the beginning of awkwardness and shyness in a boy, his show-off attitude, the attraction of girls for him, though he probably had no use for them previously. Note the beginning of the girl's interest in boys; watch her become dreamy and begin to show a desire for romantic literature.

Though these changes come gradually and subtly, alert parents are quick to recognize them. Remember, it is better to give instruction too early than too late. Why? The old story still holds: Prevention is infinitely better than attempt at cure after children have fallen into trouble or acquired wrong notions of sex.

### *Instructing*

At the end of the first section of this book an outline for each talk is given to help you. The father should study the outline, see how it is developed in the model instruction for a boy (Section II), and then repeat the model talk to his boy in a quiet, reverent way. The mother can do the same



for the girl. Sometimes the mother can give the instructions to both the boy and the girl. It can be said that the one who has the youngster's confidence should give the instruction.

When you finish the instruction, question the youngster. This gives you a chance to straighten out whatever mistaken ideas he may have formed. There are questions at the end of each outline to help you. Ask the child if he is still puzzled about anything. Was he interested? Does he know how to handle temptations? Is there anything more he would like to know? If he says the instruction was easy to understand (this may be an excuse to get out of answering), select certain points from the instruction and ask him to explain his ideas about the matter to you. These points are suggested at the end of the outline.

Some time after you have talked to your children, let them read the model instruction and then question them on it. You will be risking success if you let them read the instruction without first giving it to them vocally. It is not difficult to give this instruction once you have "taken the plunge." And your youngsters will be impressed far more deeply by your talking to them, by your tone of voice and your kindness, than they would be if they read the instruction themselves.

### *An Important Difference*

Young people usually are ignorant of the essential difference between the sex instincts in men and in women. Young people think the sex instinct is the same in all people, that it differs only in intensity. Psychologists, on the other hand, say there are two factors in the sex urge: (1) the psychic factor, the craving of the soul for companionship, understanding, and sympathetic love; (2) the physical factor, the craving of the body for the sensual side of sex.

Young people ought to be told that ordinarily the physical factor is developed earlier and more fully in men than it is in women, in whom it often remains unawakened throughout their teens and early twenties and sometimes for life.

Dr. Maurice Bigelow states the difference thus: "The sexual instincts of young men are active, aggressive, spontaneous, and automatic, while those of women as a rule are passive and subject to awakening by external stimuli, especially in connection with affection."



You might explain this to your boy or girl by saying that love in a boy is predominantly physical; in a girl it is chiefly mental and emotional.

The average girl has no idea of the fierceness of a boy's passion. She knows only that she desires to love and to be loved in return. She believes the boy is as innocent as she is; hence she can see no harm in kissing and embracing. And she thinks her parents are exaggerating the danger when they warn her not to be too free with young men, not to indulge in kissing and petting with them. But if she understands how easily boys are aroused *physically*, she will be more willing to keep them in their place. From the time she is fifteen until she is twenty years of age, she should be warned repeatedly about this difference between the sexes.

The average boy is equally ignorant of the character of the average girl. He does not know that a girl is different from himself; and when she allows him to embrace and pet her, he thinks that she is just as passionate as he is and that her physical experience is like his — the urge to go farther. But if he realizes that a girl seeks merely affection, he will be more careful.

Boys and girls who get this difference between the sexes clear in their minds are able to solve many of their difficulties about petting, kissing, and the like. Parents who worry because they cannot convince their children that there are sex dangers may find that a frequently repeated explanation of this difference that exists between boys and girls will do more good than mere warnings.

### *The Age of Ideals*

The time between the ages of fourteen and twenty is the time of ideals. Youngsters are hungry for high ideals and lofty motives. They enthusiastically embrace virtues which are presented attractively. All the suggestions we have given previously should be applied here. Challenge your children. They love to do things; they hate don'ts. Dare them to fight aggressively for right, for purity. Challenge them to be like St. Agnes, who dared to be different when she was surrounded by the rottenness of Rome.

Agnes, when tempted to sin, had the courage calmly to say no and to prove herself different from other Roman girls. And because she dared to be different, three hundred million Catholics revere her as a model of purity. For sixteen



hundred years she has continued to inspire girls all over the world to remain pure.

Boys love to be radical, revolutionary, different. Show them that St. Aloysius, by remaining pure in the midst of a rotten Renaissance court, was a "radical right." And because he was revolutionary and different, he is held up by the Church as a model of purity for youth.

Tell your children that thousands of young men and women today are daring to be different, are holding the white banner of their purity high in the midst of a pagan America. It will do your hearts good to hear your youngsters boast that they despise all forms of impurity.

### *We Should! We Will!*

You have considered the foregoing ideas and have frequently talked the matter over among yourselves. Perhaps you have decided to give your children full instruction on sex.

"Other Catholic parents," you say, "are doing it. Why can't we?"

Certainly you can! Tell your youngsters the story of the Mother of God, who knew before marriage what marriage meant. The angel, glorious and pure, appears to her. "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son. . . . And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man?" Mary was innocent—not ignorant. She knew the meaning of what she was saying; yet she was pure, "most pure." Innocent? Yes. But not ignorant in thought and word. This divine mother spoke unhesitatingly of this thing; and because she was innocent even while she knew why the promise of motherhood seemed impossible for her, we make her our mother; we ask her to gather her mantle about us, not to blind our eyes, but to hold back the fierce passions of our souls and our bodies.

### *Blessed*

"Blessed are the clean of heart." That is what matters—to be clean of heart, to be detached from evil and impure ways. Teach your children to set aside of their own will the books, the companions, the thoughts that will wound them. We do not want a life of mere negation, a series of don'ts. We want a heart that rejects and despises evil because it craves purity.



When we are before the altar, we know we are before our God. Our lips receive Him. Our eyes watch Him. And we hope we shall one day see Him in His beauty face to face. We trust our hands will one day touch Him. He, this Christ, is our lover; He is our hope and our final reward. Because you love Him and bring your children to love Him, He Himself will one day hold your love. Because we love Him and His ways, we hold ourselves detached from the world. More. We work to bring the world to that true freedom which enables man to see God because his heart is clean.

Bring your children to grow in knowledge and love of purity. God will help you to do this, for it is the work He Himself has laid on you.

## OUTLINE OF A TALK TO BOYS ABOUT PURITY

I. INTRODUCTION: Sex knowledge is good. Purity and sex knowledge are not mutually exclusive. Proved by the story of the Incarnation: Mary was innocent, not ignorant. Shame may come from wrong notions. People are mysterious about sex. Companions may at some time have spoken nastily, and observation of animals, etc., may have given false ideas. Sex pleasure is not animal pleasure; it is beautiful, God-given.

### II. MAIN POINTS.

#### A. *Marriage.*

1. God's Plan: Man was created to fill the places in heaven left vacant by the fallen angels. God allows parents to share in this plan. God creates the soul; parents help create the body. Why do parents share? Hard to rear a family, and man has a special love and care for what he himself makes. Example: You are prouder of an airplane you build than of one I buy for you. "We are proud of you—you are *ours*."

2. A Splendid Sacrament: Marriage brings children into the world. They will live eternally when this earth is no more.

3. Preparation for Marriage: You must train like any professional man. You must know your body—its purpose. God prepares our bodies. Airplanes differ; bodies differ. Man's sexual organs differ from woman's. In these organs are life-germs called "seed" in man, "eggs" in woman.



4. Marriage Act: Intimate union of parents' bodies required to bring seed to egg. Sexual intercourse—sublime, sacred, God's plan; saints, even the Blessed Virgin, came into the world through this act of generation. Parents, wishing children, intimately and lovingly embrace each other; and when seed from father is united with egg from mother, God creates the immortal soul, and the child comes into existence.

5. Birth: Child grows within the mother's body for nine months; child fed by mother's blood until strong enough to live by itself. Birth of the child usually causes mother intense pain. Child needs special food; milk forms in breasts of mother to nourish child. Birth is sacred; Our Lord came into the world in that way—"Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." With baptism child's body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit; more sacred than a tabernacle or a chalice. If child's soul is saved, has a glorious destiny for eternity.

#### *B. Fatherhood.*

1. Changes at Fourteen: Boy gets powers of fatherhood. Becomes restless, melancholy, clumsy, interested in girls; sex organs develop. All boys go through this stage. Curious about sex? Not wrong. Boy has right to know purpose of his body. Correct information to be obtained from reliable sources. Ask me or mother.

2. Emissions: Seed now runs out in sleep. All boys experience it; you will from now on. Seed has life-germs and hence is sacred. Stored in body until an oversupply causes ejection, sometimes during exciting dreams. Natural—saints were subject to it. Called "emission"; if you wish to, consult confessor. If awakened from sleep, do nothing either to help or to stop flow of seed. Say a prayer and go to sleep.

3. Self-abuse: You may not cause flow of seed directly; serious sin. Same holds for other pressures or disturbances of sexual organs. Must not cause flow by rubbing, handling; but if it just comes without your causing it, ignore it and do something interesting. No sin to look at or touch sex organs for purposes of health and cleanliness; it is *necessary*. Otherwise forget them. May have learned from others or from experience that the touching of sex organs produces pleasure. Serious danger. If pleasure is wanted, mortal sin. Somewhat like desecrating a church, mutilating another, only worse. Spoils temple of the Holy Spirit, blackens the



soul. If done, make an act of contrition; confess it. Confess worst sins first. Priest will never reveal sins confessed. Big relief after confession. Forget sins that have been confessed.

*C. Bad Thoughts:* Not sinful to have God's view of sex. Impure pictures tempt you? Girls sometimes tempt you? All boys tempted. Not sinful unless *wanted*. Can always say no; will power. Not "I won't think of them," but fill mind with clean ideas; turn mind to interesting books, radio, games, etc.

*D. Helps to Purity:* At night a swift examination of conscience, act of contrition, quiet resolve to do better. Plan to avoid occasions of sin.

1. *Frequent Communion:* Catholic college men receive Communion each week. Spiritual bread puts "muscle on the soul" for fight for purity. Make Christ your best friend; tell Him everything; He is very interested in you.

2. *Sports:* They harden the body, teach you to "take it," to endure, not be "soft," sissy. College sports are training; give *self-control*. Train to purity. A contest. A challenge. Courage to say no to bad thoughts, bad pictures, bad companions. Companions admire your courage in purity. Not jelly-spined or impure, but courageous, clean. Play the game.

*E. Sex Pleasure Is Forbidden Outside of Marriage.*

1. *In Marriage:* God put pleasure in the sex act to reward married people for the hardships of rearing children. Otherwise parents might not rear families, and God's plan of peopling heaven might be blocked.

2. *Outside of Marriage:* If God allowed sex pleasure outside of marriage, children would be born homeless and would not receive proper care. Ruin of human race. If men and boys were allowed to enjoy sex pleasures by themselves, or with others outside of marriage, there would be no incentive to rear a family. God punishes sins of impurity with hell-fire, not purgatory. Purgatory is not eternal; hell is eternal.

*F. Vocations:* Either actual fatherhood, like myself, or spiritual fatherhood, like priests or religious. Boys have the right to marriage or can give up that right for the priesthood. Both are pleasing to God. God will make vocation clear, and you will discover it by serious thought and prayer.

*G. Girls:* Important to know that a boy's sex instinct is predominantly physical; a girl's is emotional. Girls desire innocent affection, kisses, etc., and do not realize a boy may want to go farther, even to the committing of serious sins



of impurity. When a girl is affectionate, a boy thinks she is just as passionate as he is. Boys should protect girls; should not go too far. Treat them as sisters, or as your mother, or as the Blessed Virgin. Be manly, pure; girls will admire you for your purity. Remember that they are also temples of the Holy Spirit.

### III. CONCLUSION.

Challenge to purity. Praise its manliness. Give examples of purity in boys and men, athletes and saints, etc.

### IV. QUESTIONS.

1. Is it all right to know about sex? Why?
2. What is God's view of sex?
3. What was God's plan for marriage?
4. How are children born?
5. With whom should you discuss these matters?
6. What attitude will you take toward bad thoughts?
7. When do temptations become sins?
8. What are some helps to purity?
9. How do sports help you to be pure?
10. Why does God forbid sexual pleasure outside of marriage?
11. Why should a boy be careful with girls?
12. How do we discover our work in life?
13. Do you think purity is worth fighting for? Why?
14. Is there anything else you want to know? Is there anything about this matter that puzzles you?

*N. B.* If the boy's ideas are not clear, explain the matter again. He may hesitate to answer your questions; help him in a kindly way. *Build* on his ideas. Use his language, the language of the young boy, when speaking to him. This outline is only a suggestion to be fitted to the individual cases.

## OUTLINE OF A TALK TO GIRLS ABOUT PURITY

I. INTRODUCTION. After the sacrament of confirmation the next important step is either matrimony or the religious life. Knowledge of marriage is good, not evil. Proved by the story of the Incarnation: Mary was innocent, not ignorant. People rarely talk of these things because of modesty; but knowledge is necessary for purity. Marriage is God-given, splendid.



## II. MAIN POINTS.

### A. Marriage.

1. God's Plan: Men and women were created to fill the places in heaven left vacant by the fallen angels. God allows parents to share in this plan. God creates the soul; parents help create the body. Why do parents share? Rearing a family is difficult, and man has a special love and care for what he himself makes. Example: You are prouder of fudge you make than of candy dad buys for you. "We are proud of you—you are *ours*."

2. A Splendid Sacrament: Marriage brings children into the world. They will live eternally when this earth is no more.

3. Preparation for Marriage: You must train like nurses and teachers. You must know your body—its purpose. God prepares our bodies. Woman's sexual organs differ from man's. In these organs are life-germs called "eggs" in woman, "seed" in man.

4. Marriage Act: Intimate union of parents' bodies required to bring seed to egg. Sexual intercourse—sublime, sacred, God's plan; saints, even the Blessed Virgin, came into the world through this act of generation. Parents, wishing children, intimately and lovingly embrace each other; and when seed from father is united with egg of mother, God creates the immortal soul, and the child comes into existence.

5. Birth: Child grows within the mother's body for nine months; child fed by mother's blood until strong enough to live by itself. Birth of the child usually causes mother intense pain. Child needs special food; milk forms in breasts of mother to nourish child. Birth is sacred; Our Lord came into the world in that way—"Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." Happiest moment of a woman's life when she holds her first child to her heart. With baptism child's body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit; more sacred than a tabernacle or a chalice. If child's soul is saved, has a glorious destiny for eternity.

### B. Motherhood.

1. Changes at Fourteen: Childhood disappearing; girl becoming young lady. Girl becomes restless, interested in boys; body develops. No fear. All girls go through that stage. Curious about sex? Not wrong. Girl has the right to know purpose of her body and its powers of motherhood.



Correct information to be obtained from clean sources. Ask me; ready to help and advise.

2. Menstruation: Flow of blood every four weeks. Natural; no fear. Every girl experiences it at a certain age and for a long time. Saints were subject to it. Sign that God is making you capable of motherhood later on. Uneasy, blue, excitable at that time? Natural. Be patient; careful of your health; exert yourself little. Be cleanly; ask mother about taking care of yourself at that time; she is glad to help; knows you are approaching that experience. Sign of more beauty and happiness. If menstruation delayed, don't worry, unless the delay is long; then tell mother. Unbecoming to talk to others about it.

*C. Modesty — Purity — Impurity:* Modesty is the "keep-off" sign to protect purity. Men admire modest and reserved women. When sexual pleasure is *wanted*, serious sin. If pleasure comes without desire for it, no sin. Necessary to look at and touch self for purpose of health and cleanliness; no sin. Example (Cf. model talk). Curiosity leads to venial sin; desiring, *wanting*, to mortal sin. Avoid occasions of sin or the I-don't-care attitude. Impure thoughts and acts foul the temple of the Holy Spirit. Act of contrition after such sins, then confession. Confess worst sins first. Priests know how difficult it is to confess these sins. Relief and peace after confession.

*D. Bad Thoughts:* Not sinful to have God's view of sex. Impure pictures? Impure desires? All girls tempted. Not sinful unless *wanted*. Can always say no. Will power. Not "I won't think of them," but fill mind with clean ideas; turn mind to good books, radio, music, work, study, play.

*E. Helps to Purity:* Plan ahead to avoid occasions of sin, e. g., certain books, pictures, companions, etc. Imitate saints, e. g., the Little Flower; be openhearted with the Blessed Virgin. Receiving Communion frequently gives strength to overcome temptations. Make Christ your best friend; tell Him everything. Self-control gained now by overcoming poutiness; do not shirk house and school duties. Training self to say no to these faults trains to say no to temptations of impurity. Self-control is the key to being a lady.

*F. Sex Pleasure Is Forbidden Outside of Marriage.*

1. *In Marriage.* Love leads men and women together, to unselfish sacrifice in the rearing of a family. Sex pleasure is God's reward for sacrifices. Otherwise parents might not rear



families, and God's plan of peopling heaven might be blocked.

2. *Outside of Marriage.* If God allowed sex pleasure outside of marriage, children would be born homeless and would not receive proper care. Ruin of human race. If girls and women were allowed to enjoy sex pleasure by themselves, or with others outside of marriage, there would be no incentive to rear a family. God punishes sins of impurity with hell-fire, not purgatory. If punished only by purgatory, we would be careless, because purgatory is not eternal; hell is eternal. We fear hell.

*G. Boys:* Girl is built differently from boy. She wants innocent affection; boy's love is predominantly physical. If girl allows kissing and petting, boy may think she wishes to commit serious sin. Allowing intimacy cheapens and vulgarizes a girl. She is like the Blessed Virgin and is a potential mother. She is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Boys admire a girl who says, "hands off."

*H. Vocations:* Either actual motherhood like myself, or spiritual motherhood, like nuns. Girls have the right to marriage; can give up that right for the religious life. Both are pleasing to God. God will make your vocation clear, and you will discover it by serious thought and prayer.

III. CONCLUSION: Challenge to purity. Praise it. Praise models like St. Agnes, the Little Flower, etc. A pure girl is "different."

#### IV. QUESTIONS.

1. Is it all right to know about sex? About marriage? Why?
2. What is God's plan for marriage?
3. How are children born?
4. What attitude will you take toward bad thoughts?
5. When do temptations become sins?
6. What are some helps to purity?
7. How does self-control help purity?
8. Why does God forbid sexual pleasure outside of marriage?
9. Why should a girl be careful with boys?
10. Is purity worth striving for?
11. Is there anything else you want to know?
12. Is there anything about this matter that puzzles you?



N. B. If the girl's ideas are not clear, explain the matter again. She may hesitate to answer your questions; help her in a kindly way. *Build* on her ideas. Use her language, the language of the young girl, when speaking to her. This outline is only a suggestion to be fitted to the individual cases.

## SOLO FLYING

### A TALK TO BOYS ON PURITY

On the field outside a barracks of the American Eighth Air Force in England during World War II, mechanics were warming up a squadron of P-38's to escort a group of Flying Fortresses on a bombing mission.

In the group of pilots that came striding out of the darkness toward the flight line was a young replacement just over from the States. The strain of this first plunge into action showed in the tenseness of his face, though he was doing his best to cover up his fears. Though eager for the thrill of seeing his first victim plunge from the skies, he could not fight down the tightness in his chest or still his trembling fingers.

Would he come through all right? Could he handle the controls in combat? You had to know your plane and what it could do when Germans and ack-ack were thick as smoke around you. You had to give split-second response to the controls, or you would become just a name on the casualty list. You had to be coolheaded in every tight place and know what to do almost automatically.

### *Puzzled*

Have you ever felt like a young aviator going out to test his spurs? Has that feeling of strain, of eagerness for thrills yet fear of the unknown ever come over you?

As you dream of life ahead of you, aren't you puzzled over a number of things? You have trained a little for life, yet you know that the real battles and tests are in the future. And you want to be coolheaded in facing them.

You want to know how to face this test of life. You want to know what this body of yours is for; you want to know your ship and its controls. No smashup within the enemy lines for you, but a list of proud victories. Perhaps a medal or two or a piece of white ribbon on your chest to prove that you came through the battle of youth pure.



## *Sex Knowledge Is Good and Necessary*

Knowing about sex matters is not wrong. In fact it is necessary. Only the abuse of such knowledge is wrong.

Remember the story of the Incarnation, which you recall each day when you recite the Angelus? The Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary, the Blessed Virgin, and told her that she was to be the mother of God.

She answered Gabriel's startling announcement with a question: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" Her words clearly showed that she knew about sex matters. "I know not man." That meant, "I am not married—I cannot be a mother."

And Mary was probably only fifteen or sixteen years old at the time.

This knowledge of sex did not stain her glorious purity. Isn't she your model of purity, "Mary Most Pure"?

You too can know about sex and still be splendidly pure.

## *The Wrong Slant*

Yet boys feel rather ashamed when sex matters are mentioned. This is natural enough—all boys feel that way. It is not a thing to be shouted from the housetops, yet there are times like this one when one must talk about sex.

Boys notice that older people are sometimes mysterious about sex matters. And perhaps you have known boys to get into a huddle and whisper in a "smart" way about these things. Such gutter talk makes a clean-minded boy feel sneaky.

It is a sad thing that boys get lopsided ideas from each other's incorrect observations and notions. They believe that sex pleasure is just animal pleasure, and rather rotten at that. They brag of how much they know about "mysterious" things. But when they are alone, their consciences make them ashamed of what they talked about or did.

Let us turn the spotlight on this subject and get our ideas straight. And you may be sure that you will heave a sigh of relief and feel one hundred per cent better about the whole thing when we have finished discussing it.

## *The Right Slant — God's Plan*

Just what is marriage? St. Paul calls it a great sacrament. But what is it? It is part of God's great plan for us. When the angels who rebelled against God were driven out of



heaven and into hell, God decided to fill their places in heaven with new beings.

So like the marvelous architect He is, God created this visible world of ours, with its almost infinite vastness of stars. He pointed His finger to one spot in this huge universe, and this earth of ours flashed into existence. Then He landscaped it in glowing colors with sky and water and land.

When this beautiful spot was ready, the great artist created man to be king of it all. This king of creation was to rear children who were to occupy for an eternity of wonderful happiness the places in heaven made vacant by the fallen angels.

Man was to have a unique power. He was to help create those wonderful creatures who were to know earth and heaven; he was to help create other men.

He was to be the father of immortal children.

### *A Wise Artist*

Wonderfully generous, God shares His creative power with parents. You know, He could have just commanded, and millions of children would have flashed into existence, as did Adam and Eve.

For God is infinitely greater than any magician; He can make something out of nothing.

Yet He planned that parents should help Him bring children into the world. That is because He loves us so much.

He also wants every one of us to work with Him to make a good job of our lives and to help others to be happy.

Now God knows very well how difficult this is, because among other things it means the rearing of a family. You yourself can appreciate this because you see how hard mother and dad work to give you the best, to send you to a good school, to take care of you.

God also knows that we have a special love for what we ourselves make. You feel much more big-chested over an airplane you yourself have built than over one your father bought you. You would rather build birdhouses than buy them. And you get a bigger thrill from something you buy with your own money than from something your mother buys for you.

And don't you like people to notice what you yourself have built or bought? You certainly do. "I built this." In fact it makes your head swell at times, doesn't it?



It is the same with parents. God lets a mother and a father share in the rearing of His children; parents will be prouder of these children and will love them more, since the children are their own.

Don't you feel good whenever dad and mother are proud of something you've done? Why shouldn't they be proud? You are *theirs*.

That explains why God created two sexes, male and female, and planned that they should be married in order to share with Him in the creation of children. It is a splendid plan on God's part, isn't it?

Just for love of us, to give us a glorious future happiness, He creates our souls. And parents for sheer love of us cooperate with God to make our bodies.

That's why parents love each other, live together, and then, if God wants it, have children.

Look at it in this way: You owe two debts you'll never be able to pay—one to God for your soul, for that comes from God alone; one to your parents for your body.

### *When the Stars Burn Out*

Marriage then is a wonderful thing, a splendid sacrament.

The bringing of a child into the world is much more important than the building of a magnificent ocean liner or a dam like the Hoover Dam at Boulder, Arizona. Even the great air cruisers that span the oceans cannot compare to the being we call a child.

When air cruisers have disappeared to break no more records, when Hoover Dam has crumbled to dust, a little child will still be living, eternally happy with God in heaven or eternally sorry, away from God, in hell.

You can tell another boy what happens when a cat or a dog dies. "It's just dead, that's all." But you can tell him too what will happen when you die. You'll be (let's hope and pray) gloriously happy forever.

All this is made possible through marriage.

### *Training School*

An aviator trains for months and years before he gets his flying license.

A priest must study for many years before he is ready to take up his noble task, and then the sacrament of holy orders consecrates him to his life's work.



Married people are also consecrated—by the sacrament of matrimony—to their splendid work of rearing children. And people who marry must prepare themselves much more carefully than an aviator does.

An aviator, if his plane crashes, may be killed. But married people who make mistakes may hurt each other and make this life and the next miserable for themselves and for their children.

### *Learning Your Ship*

Just as a flyer must know his plane, so you must know your body and its purpose. God, because of His plan of having parents share in the creation of children, prepares our bodies for our part in this creation.

That is why He made man's body different from woman's. Thus the sexual organs in a man's body are unlike those in a woman's.

In the sexual organs of both man and woman are found the life-germs. These life-germs in man are called "seed"; in woman they are called "eggs." From the union of the seed and the egg comes the baby's body.

An intimate union of the parent's bodies is required to bring the seed together with the egg. Remember that the parents are working with God, because God wants them to share with Him this work of creation.

Contrary to the notion that some boys have, this act, which is called sexual intercourse, is sublime and sacred. If it were not for this act, we would not be here; the saints would never have been born; not even the Queen of All Saints, the Blessed Virgin, would have been born.

Love prompts parents to cooperate with God in this way. That is why parents, when they wish to bring a child into the world, must intimately and lovingly embrace each other. In this embrace the life-germs or seed from the father's body must be united with the life-germs or eggs in the mother's body.

Then if God wills it—for everything depends upon what God wants—He creates an immortal soul, and in this marvelous way the child comes into existence.

### *Birth*

The little child grows within the mother's body for nine months and is nourished with the mother's blood until the child becomes strong enough to live by itself.



Then it comes into the world from the mother's body. It is born. This usually causes the mother intense pain.

After birth infants need a special food; milk therefore forms in the breast of mothers for the nursing of the child.

### *A Sacred Thing*

Birth is so sacred that even Our Lord wanted to come into the world in this way. His sacred body was formed miraculously in His mother's womb, for Our Lord has, as you know, no earthly father. St. Joseph was His foster father.

You remember, you say in the Angelus, "And she conceived of the Holy Ghost; and the Word was made flesh." That means that the Holy Spirit through His infinite power, formed Christ's body out of Mary's pure blood and breathed a soul into it. Jesus' body grew in Mary's womb, and He was born after Mary had carried Him for nine months. That is why we say in the Hail Mary, "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." The divine Child caused His mother no pain—such as you caused your mother—when He was born; as He was miraculously conceived, so was He miraculously born. And Mary nursed Jesus with her milk until He grew strong and big enough to eat other food.

### *A Magnificent Temple*

This should make you understand how you came to have this body of yours.

God's infinite generosity and your parents' love probably make you feel a new respect for this body of yours now growing into manhood. But your body deserves respect for even greater reasons. In baptism your body became a temple of the Holy Spirit, who at this moment is within you through sanctifying grace.

And someday, if you live squarely the life of a good Catholic, your body will be a glorified body, glowing and shining in eternity even when all the stars are burned out.

That is what is meant by the phrase in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body."

### *Growing Up*

You feel very responsible for this body of yours now, don't you? To take care of it properly is a man-sized job—more of a man's job than a pilot has in handling an airliner.



You aren't a baby or a child any longer. In fact, if someone called you a baby, you would make him eat his words.

And you would be quite right.

For you are now developing so that you too can be the father of children.

You see, when you were smaller, you could not have taken care of children of your own. Hence God waits until a boy is about fourteen years old and then gives him the powers of fatherhood.

It is a time of many changes in a boy. He becomes restless, he sometimes feels blue, and he finds it difficult to behave.

Then too the sexual organs develop and become more sensitive.

Temptations against purity are stronger. And though a boy may have had no use for girls before, he now feels attracted to them.

Don't be surprised if you feel clumsy and "funny." Every boy goes through the same experience. It is just a sign that you are growing into manhood according to God's plan.

### *Right Ideas From Right Sources*

It is also part of God's wise plan that at this period of your life you become curious about sex matters.

This is as it should be.

You are developing the powers of fatherhood, and, wonderful though these powers are, an ignorant boy might abuse them and commit serious sins.

Hence you have a right to know the purpose of your body. You are learning to manage your plane, learning how to fly through the dangers of youth into manhood without a crack-up.

You should know about sex. But you should get the information from the right sources.

If there is anything you wish to know about these matters, ask your father. He is interested in you, and wants to help you. You consult him when you want to invest your savings, when you pick out a new glove or a tennis racket. It's his job to advise you, and you ought to go to him. Don't be afraid of him; he will gladly help you.



## Something New

Your mother will help you too, and any priest will be glad to assist you. Don't ask your companions. They don't know enough about the subject; they may have wrong ideas about it. If you wanted to be an aviator, would you ask one of your chums to instruct you? Or would you get the best instructor you could find?

Be open and frank with your father and mother, and you'll never go wrong.

At your age the seed runs out in sleep.

Don't let this worry you. All boys experience this, and you will from now on. It's nothing to be ashamed of, but there isn't any need for telling anyone about it.

You see, in the act of sexual intercourse the life-germs, or seed, which the father gives toward the making of a new human being are a sacred fluid which begins to be formed in a boy's body at about the age of fourteen.

Some of this seed goes into your system and helps you to become huskier.

Some of it is stored up; and when the supply becomes too large, the seed or fluid flows out of the body, usually at night during a dream that excites the sexual organs.

This is natural. Even the saints experienced it. You need not feel uneasy, even if you feel pleasure in a dream.

If you are half awake, let the seed run out, but don't try to stop or help it.

Say a Hail Mary, roll over, forget about it, and go to sleep again.

## A Warning

The important thing to remember is that you are never allowed to cause this flow of seed *intentionally*. If you have any doubts in the matter, ask your confessor. If you speak of "emissions," he will understand and gladly help you to clear up your doubts.

It is seriously sinful to *want* to cause this flow of seed.

You are not allowed to cause other disturbances or pressures in your sexual organs by rubbing or handling them. But if such disturbances or pressures come without your thinking about them, ignore them and do something interesting.

It is sometimes necessary to look at or to touch the sexual



organs for the sake of health and cleanliness. There is nothing wrong in that. It is all right to scratch these organs if they itch.

If you frequently feel much pain there, tell your father about it; he will probably have you see a doctor to remedy the trouble.

### *Danger*

Perhaps you have heard from others—or have experienced, when half asleep—that by handling the sex organs you can cause a certain pleasure. This is not seriously wrong, but it is a serious danger for you.

The danger lies in this: Some boys *deliberately* seek this pleasure. If the pleasure just comes, you can't help it. But you can't *want* it and cause it. Some boys however do *want* it. This is gravely sinful.

Here is where you must control yourself, like an excellent aviator. A boy may never play with or touch his sex organs to cause pleasure. If he does he desecrates his body, which he should respect.

### *God's Temple Made Filthy*

Did you ever hear about the desecration of a church? A church, as you know, is consecrated by a bishop.

Out in Denver years ago a fanatic murdered a priest who was about to give him Communion. The church had to be closed because of the terrible crime. The bells were no longer rung. Mass could not be said there. The Blessed Sacrament had to be taken away until the bishop could come and purify the church with solemn prayers and ceremonies.

Something even more terrible than this would happen to you if you should desecrate your body by a sin of self-abuse.

Your body is just as sacred as the grandest cathedral, for you are a living temple of the Holy Spirit.

By abusing your body in a sinful way, you force the Holy Spirit to flee from His temple, your body. Certainly you are never going to allow this to happen to you.

### *Smashing*

Would you want to smash another boy's face so badly that his mother wouldn't recognize him? Of course you wouldn't! Well you can do worse than that by abusing your body. You can blacken your soul so that even God can barely recognize it.



If you have never abused yourself, you have good reason to throw out your chest and be proud of yourself. If you have occasionally abused yourself, try hard to conquer yourself before it becomes a habit.

How to get control will be explained in a moment.

If you do not try for this control, your conscience will make life miserable for you, and the habit may weaken your health.

You don't want to be weak and sissified, do you? Well then fight to control yourself and to be pure.

### *Mastering the Controls*

Now how can you control yourself? How can you emerge victorious from temptations?

If you commit the sin of self-abuse, make a swift act of contrition and confess the sin as soon as you can. Then quietly make up your mind to conquer the habit.

But confess the sin. Don't be afraid that the priest will be shocked. He knows boys are strongly tempted to such sins. And he will never reveal your sins to anyone. He admires you because he knows how hard it is to confess sins of impurity.

When you go to confession, confess your worst sins first; the rest will be easy. Plunge through them. Say: "I committed a sin of impurity alone." Tell how often you have committed the sin. After confession you'll feel that a huge weight has been lifted from your mind.

Try not to brood over these things. If you are in trouble, confess the matter, and then forget about it. Keep going ahead.

Don't worry about bad thoughts which sometimes swarm into your mind. First of all it isn't sinful to know about sex in a pure way. We proved that. But once you know how God looks upon sex, don't spend much time thinking about it.

You'll say, "Oh that's easy to say. But what if bad thoughts continue to come into my head? What if certain pictures give me trouble? What if looking at and talking to girls bother me?"

I know it isn't easy.

### *"Tips on Temptation"*

Let's discuss this matter of bad thoughts and desires first. Remember that most boys are tempted by them. You



aren't alone in that. And remember that these thoughts and desires are not sinful unless you *want* them and *want* to take pleasure in them.

Keep this in mind: No matter how strong the temptation is, you can always refuse to give in. The will inside of you is like a giant, ready to swing into action and to say no.

Nothing can take the controls away from you.

"But what if these thoughts continue to come, and I sincerely don't *want* them?"

You can't just keep your mind empty, a blank. You can look sorrowfully at an empty ice-cream dish; but staring at it doesn't fill it. The thing to do is to fill the dish with ice cream.

So with your mind: Fill it with good thoughts. Turn it (you *can*, you know) to things in which you are interested. Pick up a good book and lose yourself in it. Listen to the radio. If you play an instrument, fill the air with music. Talk to someone—to your father, your mother, or anyone who is around. If you have a hobby, dive into it. Throw yourself wholeheartedly into a game.

Oh, there are plenty of interesting things to do, once you think of them.

### *An Easy Prayer*

Hundreds of boys overcome temptation with this easy prayer: "O Mary, my queen, my mother, remember that I am thy child. Keep me and guard me as thy property and possession." Then they forget about their temptations by doing something they like to do.

You would certainly feel disgusted if someone rubbed garbage-pail slime over your face. It makes you sick to think of it.

Well you're not going to let rotten thoughts make your soul slimy.

### *A Spiritual Bath*

Before you go to bed at night, make a swift examination of your conscience, a sincere act of contrition, and a quiet determination to behave and to do better. It's like a spiritual bath—soothing and refreshing.

Once in bed, hand yourself over to Our Lord, and you'll feel like a million dollars—and be asleep before you know it.

### *Strategy*

During the war the greatest air battles were won on paper before they were ever fought.



Just before a squadron of pilots was sent out on a mission, the commander would call the flyers into the planning room and give them instructions: This was today's target; that area was to be avoided because it was usually thick with Messerschmidts or anti-aircraft fire; the air currents over those places were tricky; and so on.

Keeping pure is a far more important battle than any air battle; and crack-ups are frequent. And you can win your battles for purity by planning ahead of time. You know that when you go to a certain place you commit sin; that place then is a danger spot for you.

"I'll avoid that," you say.

It's a sure bet that if you go with a certain gang you'll be tempted to listen to impure stories or to do impure acts.

"I'll steer clear of them; there are plenty of other fellows to go with."

Certain books and pictures are dangerous for you.

"I'll stick to good books; they're usually more interesting anyway."

### *Bread of the Strong*

Frequent Communion is a powerful aid in this battle for purity.

Most Catholic college students receive Communion each week, and you wouldn't dare call them sissies. They know that Communion is the bread of the strong.

Just as the bread you eat at home makes your muscles tougher and stronger, so the bread of Christ's body makes your spiritual muscles huskier.

Frequent Communion not only helps you to overcome temptations but usually cuts down on the number of temptations to impurity.

Make Our Lord your best friend. Tell Him everything, even the things you are ashamed of. No one else cares more for you than He does. He knows you intimately and yearns to help you to be clean minded.

And while you are talking to Him, you will feel a mysterious new strength creeping into you, a strength that will make your battles easier.

He is omnipotent, you know.

### *God's Athlete*

You probably do not need encouragement to go out for all kinds of sports, but it is worth knowing how they help



you. Games harden you, toughen your body, teach you to "take it" without whimpering.

But they do more than keep you from being a sort of sissy. You learn how to fight back, how to control your temper, how to give up things which might keep you soft.

Berwanger, an All-American fullback for two years, says that his success was due to his strict following of training rules. To harden his body and sharpen his mind, he had to give up things he liked.

But wasn't it worth it?

The "soft" boy gives in quickly to temptations of impurity because he hasn't learned how to say no, how to control himself.

Many of the great track stars of our day are Negroes. Doctors say Negroes have more endurance because they live a harder, rougher life than do white boys.

You may not smash any records in races, but you can keep a clean record in the race for purity. You may not be a football or basketball star, but you can have the daring to say no to bad thoughts, bad pictures, bad companions.

Your companions will admire the courage of your purity. Only the jelly-spined individual praises impurity and revels in it.

Play the game of life squarely—cleanly.

### *Forbidden Pleasure*

Has this ever puzzled you: that God should have put this sex pleasure into our bodies yet forbids us to enjoy it at certain times?

It seems cruel.

Let's figure it out.

When we think of the agony and danger that a mother undergoes in giving birth to a child, of the hardships of caring for children, of the difficult time a father has in making a living for his children, we see why God had to put into men and women a strong desire for children. Without this desire no one would bother having children, no children would be born to fill the heavenly places of the fallen angels, and God's plan would be frustrated.

So God in His wisdom put into men and women a strong urge, a drive, an instinct for the act of forming children.

This is called sex instinct or sex appetite.

If we didn't enjoy eating — and boys certainly do — we would not eat and hence would ruin our health. Sick people



do not enjoy eating. When your stomach growls, you lose your appetite, even for desserts.

It is the same with sexual pleasure. The act of sexual intercourse in marriage is for the purpose of bringing children into the world. Parents love each other, and in the marriage embrace they enjoy pleasures which are God's payment for the usually painful and difficult duty of bearing and rearing children.

### *God's Plan — Our Rule*

This sex instinct or appetite is good in itself.

*But it must be used according to God's plan, that is, it must be used only in marriage.*

This isn't cruel on God's part. It is His plan, isn't it?

God does not forbid sexual pleasure, except when it is wrongly enjoyed.

And it is wrongly enjoyed when it is enjoyed *outside of marriage*.

### *Why Forbidden?*

Why does God forbid this pleasure outside of marriage?

Just imagine what would happen if He allowed it! The children that would be born would have no homes like the homes that married fathers and mothers give their children.

And how would they be cared for?

Again if men and boys were allowed to enjoy sexual pleasures by themselves, or with others outside of marriage, they wouldn't bother about getting married and taking on the hard task of rearing a family. The human race would be ruined. Millions of children would never be born, and God's plan of eternal happiness for them would not be realized.

Do you blame God for forbidding this pleasure outside of marriage? No. Rather do you think that He is very wise about the matter. He has to protect unborn children, or man, like a selfish animal, would turn around and frustrate His splendid plan.

You agree now, don't you, that God must forbid you, unless you marry, to enjoy sexual pleasures?

### *The Sixth Commandment*

You did some tall thinking about what we've just been discussing, didn't you? But it was worth it. It puts you on God's side in the fight for purity and makes you want to master those controls of yours.



You're not going to be shot down behind the enemy lines by impurities.

There is just one more problem for you to figure out; it is an easy one compared to those you've already solved.

Why is it a mortal sin to violate the Sixth Commandment? Why is it not just a venial sin? Why does God punish such sins so severely? Is He unjust?

You already have the answer, but let's write it out just to make sure.

We don't worry as much about venial sins as we do about mortal sins. Venial sins are punished by purgatory, which isn't eternal; we know we'll get to heaven from purgatory. But mortal sin is punished by hell-fire that never ends.

God had to protect unborn children. He had to keep us from abusing our bodies.

So He threatens us with the punishment of eternal hell-fire if we refuse to follow His plan.

Is that clear? If it isn't, work through it again. Review some of the other ideas given earlier.

### *Vocations*

Two main roads lie ahead of you, one of which you must choose.

Either you travel the road of fatherhood of a family, or you take the road of spiritual fatherhood, which priests and religious follow.

You have the right to marry, or you can give up this right and become a priest or a religious; both of these are very pleasing to God.

God will make your vocation clear to you. You will discover your future work by serious thought and prayer.

### *Girls*

As a boy grows older, he finds himself more and more attracted to girls. He wants their companionship; he takes up dancing; he enjoys parties.

All this can be clean, innocent enjoyment for him. But one thing he must remember: A boy's sex instincts are predominantly physical; a girl's are chiefly mental and emotional.

Girls want only innocent love and affection. They may allow boys to kiss and to pet them; they fail to see any harm in it. They don't realize that boys may want to go farther than that. They would be horrified if they knew that a boy



may even want to go as far as the physical act of sexual intercourse. And an ignorant boy thinks that when a girl allows kissing and embracing she is just as passionate as he is, that she feels the same physical urge that he feels.

It's up to the boy then to protect girls. He should realize that they are innocent; he should never soil this white purity of theirs. He should admire the girl who, to protect her purity, wants the boys she associates with to keep "hands off."

A boy is a coward if he goes too far. He is taking advantage of a girl's innocence.

It's up to you then to be knightly, manly toward girls, to be pure with them—just good friends.

Respect girls as you respect your sister or your mother.

The Blessed Virgin has thrown her cloak around all girls; and if you respect her, you must respect them. Girls will admire you for it.

Remember too that girls are also temples of the Holy Spirit.

### *A Final Tip*

A good many boys (they would punch you if you called them sissies) say three Hail Marys every day — one for perseverance as a Catholic, one for their true vocation, one for purity. These prayers take but a minute. Do you think you can cram them into your morning prayers?

### *The White Flower*

A coffin draped with an American Flag rested in the old chapel at West Point. A cadet who died from injuries he had received in a football game was to be buried with full military honors, an unusual event at the old Army post.

All through the day before the funeral long lines of uniformed cadets passed in single file to view the body of their companion for the last time.

As each man halted by the coffin, he laid a white flower on the American flag, and with a respectful salute moved off.

Why?

This cadet had been a star in every form of athletics; he had been one of the best-liked men in the training school. But he was more. Throughout his course he had been famous for his cleanness of mind and body, beloved for his purity. And in the last goodbye his fellow cadets were paying him the splendid tribute of the "white flower of a blameless life."



## THE WHITE VEIL

### A TALK TO GIRLS ON PURITY

Curled up comfortably in the porch swing, Mary Jean looked idly over the velvet lawn.

A few feet away her mother, seated in a beach chair, was busy with a piece of embroidery. Neither mother nor daughter spoke, for the silence of the approaching twilight with its softened colors was not to be broken with words.

Besides, Mary Jean was dreaming, reliving the delightful hours of that morning.

It had been confirmation day at the academy. She saw herself standing before the mirror in her room; she felt again the thrill of seeing her flushed face softened by the misty veil her mother had given her.

Then the hurried, excited walk to the academy; the exclamations of her friends over the snowy fabric of her dress; the approving glance of her aunt, Sister Angelica, who was trying to hustle the girls into something like order; the tenseness of the ceremony; even the flinching from the bishop's slight blow on her cheek — all these things were reviewed in her mind.

And the excitement afterward, with everyone talking at once.

#### *A Great Day*

"Dreaming, Mary Jean?" Her mother smiled. Mary Jean gave an answering smile. She and her mother were good friends. Somehow her mother seemed to read her thoughts.

Her mother's deft hands ceased to flash over the needlework. She leaned back and began to speak quietly.

"When I saw you at the altar rail this morning, memory brought pictures to me, two pictures of other days. You'll let me reminisce a little, won't you?"

Mary Jean's quick smile was sufficient answer.

"Well somehow I saw again the veiling ceremony of your aunt, Sister Angelica. It wasn't a very pleasant day for me. We had always been so close to each other. I felt deep down in my heart that she was doing something splendid, yet she seemed so young to be giving up everything. She looked very beautiful in her simple veil."

Mary Jean couldn't suppress a smile at the idea of Sister Angelica's ever having been young. But her smile softened when she remembered the constant kindness of her aunt.



## *Two Veils*

"Yes; she took one road, and I another," her mother continued. "Several years later I too wore a veil — that lacy veil you wanted to wear today. And I'm sure I was a great deal more flustered than sister was during her veiling. My wedding was the other picture that came back to me today. And looking up at you, just as the bishop bent over to anoint your forehead with the holy oil, I wondered what would be the next great step you would take."

The girl, deeply intent on what her mother was saying, moved a bit uneasily as she prepared herself for an earnest talk.

Her mother gave her a quick glance and continued. "Then I looked over to the altar of St. Anne, and I fancied I could hear her talking to the child Mary standing beside her. I felt that she was telling Mary about life, about what was ahead of her."

## *Worth Knowing*

"Going to play St. Anne, mother, and give me a sermon?" A mischievous smile appeared on Mary Jean's lips.

"No," replied her mother, "but if you'll let me, I'll tell you something you should know."

And as the girl settled herself more comfortably in the swing, her mother went on.

"Some people think it is wrong to know about marriage. But that isn't true at all. Only the abuse of such knowledge is wrong. Remember the story of the Incarnation, which you recall each day when you say the Angelus? The Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Blessed Virgin and told her she was to be the mother of God. She answered Gabriel's startling announcement with the question, 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?' She showed very clearly by her words that she knew about marriage, 'I know not man.' That means, 'I am not married — I cannot be a mother.' And she was probably only fifteen or sixteen years old at the time. This knowledge of marriage did not stain her wonderful purity in any way; she is still our model — 'Mary Most Pure.' You, like your namesake Mary, can know about marriage and still be pure."

## *God's Way*

"Good people usually don't talk about these things. That's because of their modesty; and that is as it should be. But



you should know of these things in a pure way. For motherhood is beautiful, God-given."

The girl directed an inquiring glance at her mother and then continued to stare at the green smoothness of the lawn.

"That lawn is beautiful, isn't it?" her mother said. "Those lovely flowers nodding their delicate heads at us, that neatly trimmed hedge—they are all beautiful, aren't they? It's a beautiful world, Mary Jean, and God is a great artist."

Mary Jean was perplexed. Her mother had begun to talk about marriage, and now she was talking about the lawn.

"And beautiful as all of it is," continued her mother, "it is all for our enjoyment. We are more important than all that. Perhaps we are not all so beautiful or so cheerful looking as those flowers or that grass, but we are more wonderful."

### *New Children of God*

"It's all part of God's wonderful plan. When the angels who rebelled against God were driven out of heaven and into hell, God decided to fill their places in heaven with new beings.

"So like the marvelous architect that He is, God created this visible world of ours with its almost infinite vastness of stars. He pointed His finger to one spot in this huge universe, and this earth of ours flashed into existence. Then He landscaped it in glowing colors with sky and water and land.

"When this beautiful spot was ready, the great artist created man to be king of it all; He gave man a wife for a companion and helper. This king and this queen of all creation were to rear children who were to occupy for an eternity of wonderful happiness the places in heaven made vacant by the fallen angels.

"These two, man and woman, were to have a unique power. They were to cooperate in the creation of those wonderful creatures who were to know earth and heaven.

"They were to help create other men.

"They were to be the parents of immortal children."

### *Hard But Lovely*

Over the girl there stole something of the wonder in her mother's voice. It was all strangely thrilling, and she listened intently.

"Wonderfully generous, God shares His creative power with parents. You know, He could have just commanded,



and millions of children would have flashed into existence. Yet God, who created Adam and Eve from nothingness, planned that parents should work with Him to bring children into the world.

"That's because He loves us so much. He wishes us to share in the joy of creation, just as He also wants us to work with Him to live good lives and to make others happy.

"Now God knows very well how difficult married life is, especially in the rearing of a family. You yourself appreciate this because you see how hard dad and I must work to give you the best of everything, above all a good education.

"God also knows that we have a special love for what we ourselves make. You feel prouder of fudge you yourself make than of the box of candy your uncle, Father Jim, brings you. I've noticed that you enjoy showing your friends the things you've made for your room more than you enjoy showing them anything else in the house.

" 'I made that myself,' you say.

"Parents feel that same pride of creation. God lets a mother and a father share in the creation of their children because, if those children are their own, they'll be prouder of them and love them more.

"You are happy when your father and I show that we are proud of something you've done. Why shouldn't we be proud? You're *ours*."

### *Wonderful*

"That's true, mother," said Mary Jean. "I never thought of it before."

"That's the reason," her mother continued, "why God created the sexes, male and female, and ordained that they should be married in order to share with Him in the creation of children. It's a splendid plan on God's part, isn't it? Just for love of us, to give us a glorious future happiness, He creates our souls. And parents, for sheer love of us, co-operate with God to make our bodies.

"That's why parents love each other, live together, and then, if God wants it, have children."

"It is wonderful, isn't it, mother?" murmured the girl.

"Yes, marriage is a wonderful thing, a splendid sacrament. The bringing of a child into the world is much more important than the building of a great cathedral like St. Patrick's in New York, or one of those luxurious ocean liners you've heard about.



"A lovely home of your own on a vast country estate couldn't compare in importance to the being we call a child. When ocean liners carry no more passengers to romantic Europe, when all the great country estates have crumbled into dust, a little child will still be living, eternally happy with God in heaven, or eternally sorry, away from God, in hell.

"You can tell another girl what happens when a pet of hers dies. There may be tears over it. But it's dead, just dead; that's all. But you can tell her what will happen when you die. You'll be (I hope and pray) gloriously happy forever. All this is made possible through marriage."

### *In Training*

Not even the hilarious laughter of the two academy girls who were walking down the street roused the motionless figure in the swing. She was dreaming of a home of her own, of children, her children.

Her mother glanced at her, was silent for a few minutes, and then went on.

"Nurses train for three hard years before they are ready for their work. Priests, like Uncle Jim, must study for many years before they are ready to take up their noble task, and then the sacrament of holy orders consecrates them to their life's work. Married people are also consecrated — by the sacrament of matrimony — to their splendid work of rearing children.

"And people who marry must prepare themselves much more carefully than a nurse does. A nurse, if she makes a mistake, may be discharged. But married people who make mistakes may hurt each other and make this life and the next miserable for themselves and for their children.

"And just as a nurse must know the purposes of medicines and surgical instruments, so we must know the purposes of our bodies. God, because of His plan to have parents share in the creation of children, prepares our bodies for our part in this creation. That is why He made woman's body different from man's. Thus the sexual organs in a woman's body are unlike those in a man's. In the sexual organs of both man and woman are found the life-germs. These life-germs in man are called 'seed'; in woman they are called 'eggs.' From the union of the seed and the eggs comes the baby's body."



## *Union*

Over the girl came the realization of deep truths.

"An intimate union of the parents' bodies is required to bring the seed together with the egg. This act, which is called sexual intercourse, is sublime and sacred. Remember that the parents are working with God, because God wants them to share with Him this work of creation.

"It if were not for this act, we would not be here; the saints, even the Queen of All Saints, the Blessed Virgin, would not have been born.

"Love prompts parents to cooperate with God in this way. That is why parents, when they wish to bring a child into the world, must intimately and lovingly embrace each other. In this embrace the life-germs or seed from the father's body must be united with the life-germs or eggs in the mother's body. Then if God wills it—for everything depends upon what God wants—He creates an immortal soul, and in this marvelous way the child comes into existence."

## *A Woman's Body*

The gentle, calm voice paused for a moment, and then went on evenly.

"The little child grows within the mother's body for nine months and is nourished with the mother's blood until the child becomes strong enough to live by itself.

"Then it comes into the world from the mother's body. It is born. This usually causes the mother intense pain. After birth infants need a special food; milk therefore forms in the breasts of mothers for the nursing of the child."

The girl threw a quick, sympathetic glance at her mother, and asked, "Did I hurt you, mother, when I came?"

"Yes, dear; but I loved you, and I wanted you so much that I did not mind the pain."

They were both silent. A strange feeling of gratitude toward her mother was welling up in the girl's heart. She hadn't known that her mother had suffered to bring her into the world.

## *Mother Like Mary*

"What I've told you so far is so wonderful that even Our Lord wanted to come into the world in this way. His sacred body was formed miraculously in His mother's womb, for Our Lord has, as you know, no earthly father. St. Joseph was His foster father.



"At noon, when the Angelus bell rings at the academy, you recall His incarnation when you say, 'And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.' And then you say, devoutly, 'And the Word was made flesh.' What is meant by that? The Holy Spirit, through His infinite power, formed Christ's body out of Mary's pure blood and breathed a soul into it. After that Jesus grew in Mary's womb. And He was born after Mary had carried Him for nine months.

"That's why we say in the Hail Mary, 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.'

"The divine Child caused His mother no pain—such as you caused me—when He was born; as He was miraculously conceived, so was He miraculously born. And Mary nursed Jesus with her milk until He grew strong and big enough to eat other food.

"And someday, Mary Jean, if God wants it, you may hold a tiny bit of life against your heart, and all the happiness that can come to a woman will be summed up in that moment when you know that this is your baby, your own child."

### *With Respect*

The girl touched her toes to the porch floor and gave the swing a gentle push. She said nothing.

Her mother grew silent. She was smiling pensively, dreaming of the thrill of hearing a child's voice say "grandma." Wistfully she turned her thoughts away from the dream, sighed, and began to speak again.

"This should make you understand how you came into the world. It gives you a certain respect for your body, doesn't it?

"But your body deserves respect for even greater reasons. In baptism you became a child of God, and your body became a temple of the Holy Spirit. Today when the bishop made the sign of the cross on your forehead with the holy oils, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and made this temple of your body richer, stronger, more beautiful than it was before. That makes you holier than a church or a tabernacle or a golden chalice.

"And if you come through life pure and noble, your body will one day be a glorified body, glowing and shining in eternity even when all the stars are burned out. That is what is meant by the phrase in the Apostles' Creed, 'I believe . . . in the resurrection of the body'."



"I hadn't thought of it in that way," murmured the girl, half to herself. "It makes you feel differently about your body, doesn't it?"

### *Growing Up*

"Yes it does," replied her mother. "And the fact that you do feel differently about it is a sign that you're growing up. You aren't interested in dolls any more. You are more particular about your appearance than you used to be. I suppose you've even used some of my face powder now and then."

The mother laughed.

Mary Jean tried to cover her rising blush with a laugh and then heaved a sigh of relief as her mother excused it all with:

"Well you're no longer a child. Soon you'll be a young lady. Girls become restless when they are about your age. Sometimes they feel blue; they become romantic and dream a good deal. Their bodies develop and become more beautiful. They show more interest in——"

"Boys, mother?" interrupted the girl. "I've noticed that, and I've wondered about it."

### *Boys Are Interesting*

Her mother smiled. "That's perfectly natural," she said. "A girl usually acquires that interest when she is about fourteen years old. She also becomes curious about sex matters.

"You have a right to know the purpose of your body. If you went along blindly, you might stumble into serious trouble. You should know about sex, but you should get the information from the right sources. Come to me whenever anything troubles you. You know I am always ready to help you. We talk over your new dresses, your parties. Don't be afraid to ask me about the more serious things. Don't ask your companions. They don't know enough about life, and they may have silly and incorrect notions."

"Don't worry, mother. You're my best friend."

### *For the Future*

"Thank you, dear," replied her mother. "I appreciate your confidence in me. I am glad that we are good friends, particularly now that you are about to go through a great change.

"You see, you are now developing so that you can be the mother of children. When you were a child, you couldn't



have taken care of a baby of your own. But now God is preparing your body to be the golden vessel of your own children. About every four weeks you will have a flow of blood. You needn't be frightened by this; it is normal. Every girl experiences this each month for a period of many years. It's one of the signs that God has made you capable of being a mother.

"During this time of menstruation, as it is called, you will feel uneasy, excited, and perhaps quite ill. These reactions are natural. You have to be patient. And you will be, since you know all this is part of God's glorious plan.

"Try to be especially careful about your health during this time. Don't exert yourself overmuch. Be cleanly about it. Mother knows that you are coming to this stage of your development. Ask me how to take care of yourself at that time. You know that I want to see you healthy and happy.

"If your menstruation is delayed for a short time, don't worry. But if it is delayed for a long time, tell me and I'll tell you what to do. If there is anything else you want to know about menstruation, ask me. But if I were you, I wouldn't talk about it to others. Modest women never do.

"And remember that menstruation is a sign that God is making you capable of motherhood. It's thrilling to realize, isn't it, that soon you'll be more beautiful, happier?"

### *Keep Off!*

There was a happy glow in the eyes of the girl. Unconsciously she reached up and smoothed her hair.

Her mother went on.

"I often remember my convent days," her mother continued. "We used to think the sisters were strict about modesty. But all through the years I have remembered their lessons of modesty, and I have been grateful.

"I am glad that the good sisters were strict with us. I realize now that modesty keeps one pure. It's like a high fence that is built around a beautiful country estate to keep vandals and animals from destroying the lawns and the trees and the flowers. Modesty is like a keep-off sign that protects the soul's purity.

"There's nothing men admire more in women than this delicate sense of modesty and reserve. Oddly enough boys really prefer the old-fashioned type of girl to the wild type. A boy puts a girl on a pedestal. He looks up to her. But



if she steps down from that pedestal and cheapens herself, he loses respect for her.

"I suppose you've noticed the sweet modesty of the sisters at the academy. It has always impressed me. They taught me that a girl has to be modest and pure with herself before she can be modest with others."

"Why is that, mother?" asked the girl.

"If a girl who was not pure with herself tried to act modestly with others, she would be a sham. You can't deceive others very long. But if a girl keeps her mind pure, doesn't touch herself or look at herself immodestly, she is bound to appear pure to others."

### *When Sinful*

"Mother," said the girl, "I've often been confused about such things. I don't understand the difference between a venial sin of impurity and a mortal sin of impurity."

"That is a difficult problem," agreed her mother. "This is the way I understand it: When you *intentionally* try to experience sexual pleasure, when you *want* it, you sin mortally; you are impure. If this sexual pleasure comes without your thinking about it or wanting it, you can't help it; that is not a sin. But you can't *want* it when it comes.

"Then too we have to do the things necessary for health and cleanliness; because these things are necessary, they are not wrong.

"Let's take an example, and perhaps the distinction will be clearer. You love fudge, don't you?"

"You know only too well that I do, mother," answered the girl.

"Well let's say that eating too much fudge makes you seriously ill. Doctor Barnes warns you not to eat even a little piece of fudge. We'll say you are visiting Rosemary Dillon. Rosemary decides to make some fudge. Good manners prompt you to help Rosemary, though you would prefer not to, since you're afraid you'll be tempted to eat some of the fudge and you will then become seriously ill.

"Now that's the attitude you should take in the matter of purity: Fear the temptation, but realize that certain acts such as touching yourself or looking at yourself while you are bathing and dressing, since they are *necessary*, are not sinful acts.



## *Danger Signs*

"To go back to our example: You cook the fudge, and its delicious odor attracts you. This is a danger sign for you, because you know from past experience that when you smell fudge you just can't resist eating it, and when you eat it you become violently ill.

"So it is with impurity. A girl knows that every time she looks at certain pictures or reads certain books she gets impure thoughts and commits a serious sin of impurity by enjoying those thoughts. Such pictures and books are occasions of sin for her, and she must stay away from them.

"In the case of the fudge, you would get away from the delightful odor, wouldn't you? You would make some excuse to get away, for to stay would be an occasion of danger to your health.

## *Look Out*

"But suppose you didn't leave? Suppose you stayed near the fudge and, taking a chance, said, 'Oh, well! Doctor Barnes only forbade me to *eat* it.' You'd be putting yourself in danger, wouldn't you?

"In the same way deliberately looking at an indecent picture or deliberately reading a bad book would be a venial sin.

"Again the fragrant odor of the fudge tempts you more and more. Perhaps you say, 'My, it looks good!' And perhaps Rosemary adds, 'It tastes better than it looks.' You continue to linger until you finally desire to eat some of the fudge.

"Similarly led by curiosity, you might continue to look at an indecent picture or read an indecent book until you desired the impure pleasure. Such desire is a mortal sin; you have *wanted* the pleasure.

"Worst of all is the attitude of one who says, 'I'll take a chance. I don't care whether or not I get sick.' Such an attitude comes from bad will. You are willing to put yourself in the danger of serious illness.

"In the matter of purity a person who courts the danger, not caring whether or not she commits sin, is already guilty of serious sin. But I know you'll never fall into that way of thinking, Mary Jean."

"Then wanting impurity and enjoying it is a mortal sin," Mary Jean said, thoughtfully. "Just yielding to curiosity and taking chances, unless I really desire impure pleasure or



have a don't-care attitude, are venial sins. And acts that are necessary aren't sinful. Is that correct, mother?" Her mother nodded. "I think I get it now."

### *Slime*

A neighbor who was passing by called a greeting, and mother and daughter waved in response. For a moment they were diverted by the swift changes of color on tree and bush caused by the play of the dying light.

"An act of impurity," continued the mother, "is like deliberately rubbing slime over ourselves; it is a deliberate desecration of the house of God, an insult to the Holy Spirit.

"Did you ever hear about the desecration of a church? You recall, don't you, the consecration of our parish church three years ago? Well out in Denver years ago a fanatic murdered a priest who was just about to give him Communion. The church had to be closed because of the terrible crime. The bells were no longer rung. Mass could not be said there. The Blessed Sacrament had to be taken away until the bishop could come and purify the church with solemn prayers and ceremonies.

"But when a girl welcomes impure pictures or desecrates her body by an unclean touch, isn't it just as horrible as the desecration of a church? It's the fouling of a sacred temple, the temple of the Holy Spirit. We have the awful power of blackening our soul so that even God can barely recognize it.

### *The Cure*

"I once asked your uncle, Father Jim, how he instructed people who had difficulties of impurity. He said that he advised such people to make a swift act of contrition after they had yielded to impure thoughts or desires or had committed a filthy act and then to confess the sin as soon as possible.

"He also said that people find it extremely hard to confess such sins because of the feeling of shame. He encourages these penitents to confess these sins first, to 'get them off their chests,' as he put it. Father Jim also remarked that he admires a person who frankly confesses these sins, and he enjoys the sighs of relief and the quick, happy steps of the departing penitents."

### *When Temptation Comes*

"But, mother, what's one to do when these bad thoughts continue to come into one's head?"



"That's an important question, Mary Jean. Remember that most girls are tempted occasionally. You aren't alone in this difficulty. But such thoughts and desires aren't sinful unless you *want* them and *want* to take pleasure in them. No matter how strong a temptation is, you can always say no to it."

"That's easy to say," replied the girl, "but suppose that, though I sincerely don't want these thoughts, they still keep crowding in on my mind?"

"It isn't easy to get rid of these thoughts and desires," came the reply. "It puzzled me for a long time, until a priest showed me the way out. You can't make your mind a blank, you know. You can sit at your dressing table and stare sadly at an empty perfume bottle. But just staring at it won't fill it with perfume. The thing to do is to have the bottle refilled."

"So it is with your mind: Fill it to the brim with good thoughts. Turn your mind (*you can, you know*) to things in which you are interested. Pick up a good book and lose yourself in it. Listen to the radio. Play the piano and sing something you like. Talk to someone—to me, or to anyone else who is around. Take up some work which fascinates you; participate in a game you enjoy. If bad thoughts come while you are in school, drive yourself to study. And these impure thoughts, because they receive no attention, will leave you. You just haven't time for them, that's all."

### *Watchfulness*

There was a serious, thoughtful look on the girl's pretty face. Pleased, her mother regarded her for a moment and then continued.

"That priest was clever, wasn't he? He also showed me how to deal with other temptations. He told me to plan ahead to resist temptation, just as we plan parties; just as we choose our guests. If you know that certain girls are immodest or indecent, you must steer clear of them. If you know that certain books or pictures will soil your purity, don't look at them. You know that you can have good, clean enjoyment in a hundred ways."

Mary Jean's fox terrier came bounding up the porch steps and, after nuzzling the mother's outstretched hand in a friendly fashion, jumped up on the swing and panted appreciation for Mary Jean's fondling of his silky ears.



"I often envy you when I see you setting out for the academy. You are so happy there. But what pleases me most is that I know you are in splendid hands. The sisters are themselves fine models for you to imitate, and they give you other models: St. Agnes, who was a very popular saint in my day; the Little Flower, who is your favorite saint. And of course every girl likes to kneel before a statue of the Blessed Virgin and talk over problems with her. Whenever I see a statue of the Immaculate Conception, I am reminded of a story I heard during a lecture by a famous explorer.

### *The Cobra*

"In far-off India young girls and women, when they are indoors, never wear shoes. One day a Hindu girl was crossing a dark room that overlooked the garden. Suddenly she stopped, trembling from head to foot, unable to move. At last an agonized cry broke from her lips.

"'Mother! mother!' she cried, 'I've stepped on a cobra!'

"'Don't move, child. I'm coming. Stand still!'

"There was a stir in the next room; a lamp shone through the curtained doorway, and the mother appeared. A terrible sight met her eyes. The terrified child was bringing all her weight to bear on her foot that pinned the head of the cobra to the floor. In the struggle to free its head, the cobra had wound itself around the child's slender ankle. The mother came forward. She put her arm around the girl's waist and put her foot on the cobra's head. With effort she concentrated her weight on that foot. Slowly the struggles ceased; slowly the coils relaxed their hold, then fell away in lifeless rings. The snake's head was crushed.

"I love to think that when temptations come to you, you call upon the Mother of God, who flies to your rescue, places herself at your side, and crushes the evil that tempts you."

### *The Great Friend*

The dog, lying in the girl's lap, was looking anxiously up into her face, as if asking why she was so tense. But when a smile crept over her face, the terrier, content again, put his head down on his paws.

"Another advantage of convent schooling is the habits it builds in girls. Most convent-educated girls, accustomed to receiving Communion daily, continue to receive Communion frequently during the rest of their lives. I know you laugh



when we call ourselves girls. Our hair may be gray, but we're still young in spirit.

"In those peaceful, happy moments after we have received Holy Communion, in the quiet of the chapel, we come to know Our Lord for the true friend He is, a friend whose friendship endures forever. Tell Him everything, even the things you're ashamed of. No one else cares more for you than He does. He knows you intimately and yearns to help you. And while you are talking to Him, you'll feel a mysterious new strength creep into you, a strength that will make your troubles disappear and your temptations easy to overcome.

"Frequent Communion not only helps overcome temptation but usually reduces the number of temptations one has to impurity. One can't be impure when one receives the pure body of Christ into one's heart frequently."

### *Developing Strength*

Mary Jean was quiet for a time and then frowned.

"Mother, why do you make me help around the house? Rosemary Dillon always boasts that she doesn't have to do anything at home. We could get a maid to do the work; the Dillons have one."

Her mother laughed. "Don't you ever dream about a home of your own?" she asked. "Don't you ever dream that someday you'll have a cozy little house somewhere, furnished as cleverly and as tastefully as you've dreamed it would be?"

"Even if you haven't dreamed about a house of your own, don't you see how the little things you do at home train you to be unselfish and helpful? Saying no vehemently to the temptation of skipping out and leaving all the work to me trains you to say no to other temptations. Biting your tongue when you feel like being 'sassy,' or forcing yourself to smile when you feel pouty or impatient, gives you self-control. And when greater temptations threaten you, you will be able to turn your back on them because you've trained yourself; you have got a grip on yourself.

"You admire Sister Angelica because she is never cross, however much you provoke her. Well she wasn't so patient when she was young. But she has trained herself to be patient and kind, though she may feel like losing her temper at times. Isn't that what you mean by 'being a lady'?"



"You may wear gorgeous clothes; but if you haven't self-control, you just aren't a lady."

### *God Repays*

"Sermon! Sermon!" chanted the girl. "But I asked for it." Then after a few minutes, "Mother, when you talked about this sex pleasure which we aren't allowed to enjoy because it would be a sin against the Sixth Commandment, a funny idea popped into my head. It seems cruel that God gives us the power to enjoy this pleasure and then forbids us to use it under certain circumstances. It puzzles me."

"I'm glad you asked about that," answered her mother. "When God gave parents the power to share in the creation of children, He realized that He was burdening men and women fearfully. To be responsible for the souls of children, to suffer as mothers have to suffer in giving birth to children, to make sacrifices such as fathers have to make—well, God knew He was asking a good deal when He asked all this of men and women."

"He had to put into men and women a strong desire for children. Without this desire no one would bother having children; no children would be born to fill the places in heaven made vacant by the fallen angels, and God's plan would be frustrated."

"So into the hearts of men and women He poured this attraction and joy we call love. It is so beautiful that nobody has ever been able to explain it. Men and women meet and are drawn toward each other so powerfully that they want to unite their lives, their thoughts, their very bodies through this thing called love."

"Because they love men, women grow more beautiful, make their homes sweeter, become unselfish and devoted, keep themselves good and fine, and bring lovely children into the world. Love between a man and a woman is God's reward to parents for their share in the creation of His children."

### *Only in Marriage*

"This love between married people is good in itself, but it must be used according to God's plan: It must be used *only in marriage*. This isn't cruel on God's part, is it? He has to protect His plan. God doesn't sanction this love when it is wrongly enjoyed, and it is wrongly enjoyed when it is enjoyed *outside of marriage*."



"That makes it clearer," said Mary Jean. "But I'm still a bit puzzled."

"Try to imagine then what would happen if God allowed everyone to enjoy this pleasure outside of marriage. The children that would be born would have no homes like the homes that married fathers and mothers give their children. How would they be cared for?"

"Again if young girls and women were allowed to enjoy sexual pleasure by themselves, or with others outside of marriage, they wouldn't bother about getting married and taking on the hard task of rearing a family. The human race would be ruined. Millions of children would never be born, and God's plan of eternal happiness for them would not be realized.

"Do you blame God for forbidding this pleasure outside of marriage? No. Rather do you think that He is very wise about the matter. He has to protect unborn children, otherwise we would selfishly spoil His splendid plan."

"I understand now, mother," said the girl. "It makes me feel that I am on God's side in the fight for purity."

"Shall we figure out one more puzzle?" asked her mother. Mary Jean's look of eagerness was sufficient answer.

### *Why Mortal Sin?*

"Why is it a mortal sin to violate the Sixth Commandment? Why is it not just a venial sin? Why does God punish such sins so severely? Is He unjust?"

"Well, when I ask you to make your bed in the morning, you sometimes skip out, thinking: 'It means only a scolding when I get home this afternoon, and that's a long way off. Besides, a scolding doesn't last long.'"

"We sometimes feel the same way—though we shouldn't—about venial sins. Venial sins are punished by purgatory, which isn't eternal. We know we'll get to heaven from purgatory. But mortal sin is punished by hell-fire that never ends.

"God had to protect unborn children. He had to keep us from abusing our bodies. So He threatens us with the punishment of eternal hell-fire if we refuse to follow His plan."

The telephone rang, and Mary Jean jumped up to answer it. She was gone for about ten minutes and on her return excitedly told her mother that Rosemary Dillon had invited her to a party. The mother, amused over the girl's excite-



ment, smiled sympathetically in response to the girl's rushing words. But when the girl fell silent again, the mother began to speak in serious tones.

"You know I've never made you stay away from parties; I've helped you to have good times here. You're going to enjoy parties and dances very much from now on. And I don't mind the clean, innocent enjoyment you have with other boys and girls. But there is something you should know about the relationship between young boys and girls."

### *Perfectly Natural*

The girl looked anxiously at her mother. Was her mother going to forbid her going to parties and dances?

"As a girl grows older, she finds herself more and more attracted to boys. She wants their companionship; she wants to be friendly with them. That's perfectly natural.

"But a girl should know that a boy is built differently from herself. Girls want only innocent love and affection. They can't see any harm in kissing and perhaps a little petting.

"But an uninformed girl would be horrified if she knew that some boys want to go farther than just kissing and petting. Love in a boy is predominantly physical. If a girl allows kissing and petting, some boys think she is willing to go farther and commit one of the worst sins of impurity. Some boys might take advantage of her innocence.

"It's all right to be friendly with a boy; but be modest and reserved; he will admire you for it. If you allow him to get too intimate, you become cheap and vulgar in his eyes.

"If a girl, when she is tempted to be over-intimate with a boy, would only remember that she is a woman like the spotless Mary and a potential mother of innocent little babies, temptation would disappear quickly. If she would recall that she is a living temple of the Holy Spirit, she would never let anyone harm that temple. Boys will admire and respect you for your modesty."

### *Which Veil?*

The girl was silent. Her expression was serious as she stared unseeingly into the darkness that had cloaked everything.



"Yes, Mary Jean, this morning I wondered what your future would be. I wondered which veil you would choose. Two paths lie open before you. You will be either a mother, as I am, or a mother of souls, as Sister Angelica is. You have the right to marry, or you can give up that right and become a nun. Both these vocations are very pleasing to God. He will make your choice clear to you. You will discover it by serious thought and by prayer.

### *The Lovely Agnes*

"But right now the important thing is modesty, purity. You know the story of Agnes, the pure flower of Rome. She dared to be different from the pagan girls of her time. When tempted to sin, she had the courage to say no. And because she was different, millions of Catholic girls today revere her and are proud of her. She never stained the white of her confirmation veil. And the very prison cell where she was tempted to sin is today a shrine where thousands of girls like herself have knelt and prayed that they too might be different, that they too might be pure."

Mother and daughter were silent for a time. The chiming of a clock within the house roused them. Mary Jean's mother rose and said, "It's time we were getting dad's dinner, isn't it?"

The girl came over to her mother, kissed her shyly, and arm in arm they went into the house.