

The Church depends on Holy Scripture and Tradition for her teachings. Contributing to this Tradition are the writings of venerable “Fathers” and elders. These men of God present us with the living Faith of our ancestors-i.e., those who have gone before us in the sure knowledge of the truth, and secure for us a continuity with the early Church of the apostles and martyrs. In the most limited sense, the Fathers are identified with the first days Christianity. However, we cannot relegate the teachers of the Faith solely to the earliest era of Christianity. We must see the Fathers in the recent writing of “contemporaries”, even if they speak to us through the echoes of the last few centuries. To do otherwise would be to admit that the Holy Spirit lives in the Church and speaks to us this very day. “Harden no your hearts” and learn the truth of the Lord. “Fear not, here is your God, He comes to save you” [Isa 35:4].

It is obvious from reading the teachings of the Fathers of the Church that sex is a wondrous and beautiful gift from Almighty God. The proper use of human sexuality is called chastity, and the improper use of human sexuality is lust. Secular society today has completely lost the true meaning and inherent beauty of this gift from God. To the carnal man and woman, sex is a plaything, a cheap imitation of a precious jewel. However, “sexual freedom” demands self-control. Otherwise, it is not only tarnished, but brings sorrow and suffering to those who abuse the powerful emotions which surround this transforming gift of creation and personal sanctification

Quotes by the Holy Fathers on Sex/Lust:

“Sex is not evil; it is a gift from our God. But it can become a hindrance to someone who desires to devote all his strength to a life of prayer...Concerning sex, we must strive for self-control. St. Paul tells us to seek peace and sanctification, without which it is impossible to see the Lord. Let us pursue holiness, then, in order to attain the Kingdom of Heaven.” -St. John Chrysostom

“Only the lifeless are exempt from the battles of lust. We know, then, that the struggle of flesh and the spirit is extremely useful to us..to gain self-control and mastery over our desires.” -St. Cassian the monk

“Concerning your body, and the passions which afflict its members.....reverence the honour with which God has dignified the body, and do not reduce it to the vile conditions of sinful lust.” -St. John Chrysostom

“Christians practice self-control and exercise continence, observe monogamy, guard chastity, and wipe out all injustice, destroying sin with its root.” – St. Theophilus of Antioch

“In the sixteenth year of the age of my flesh..., the madness of raging lust exercised its dominion over me (through sexual desire), and my invisible enemy trod me down and seduced me. In my sexual involvements, I drew my shackles along with me, terrified to have them taken off me. What made me a slave to lust was the bait of satisfying and insatiable momentary urge.” -St. Augustine of Hippo

“Living a chaste Christian life is sometimes more difficult than suffering a martyr’s death.” - St. Mark the Ascetic

“Lustful stories and drawings set up market-places for immorality, and establish infamous opportunities for the young to practice every sort of corrupt please.” -Athenagoras (2nd cent. Athenian Christian philosopher)

“The princes of evil have blinded me with their passions and by their cunningness they have robbed me of the beauty of my youth. What can I do, now that I have lost my purity? I will cry out to Christ, that He might return my beauty to me- and then will the evil ones be ashamed. My Savior cries out to me, to His disciple: do not despair of the salvation; I will restore you and forgive you your sins. I have found you and I will not leave you; for I have redeemed you with my very own Blood. Cry out, O sinner, with all your might, and spare not your throat; for your Lord is merciful and loves those who repent. As soon as you return, your Father will come out beforehand to meet you. He will slaughter the fatted calf, clothe you in a fine robe, and rejoice in you.” -St. Ephraim the Syrian