

St. John Paul II and The Call to Chaste Love

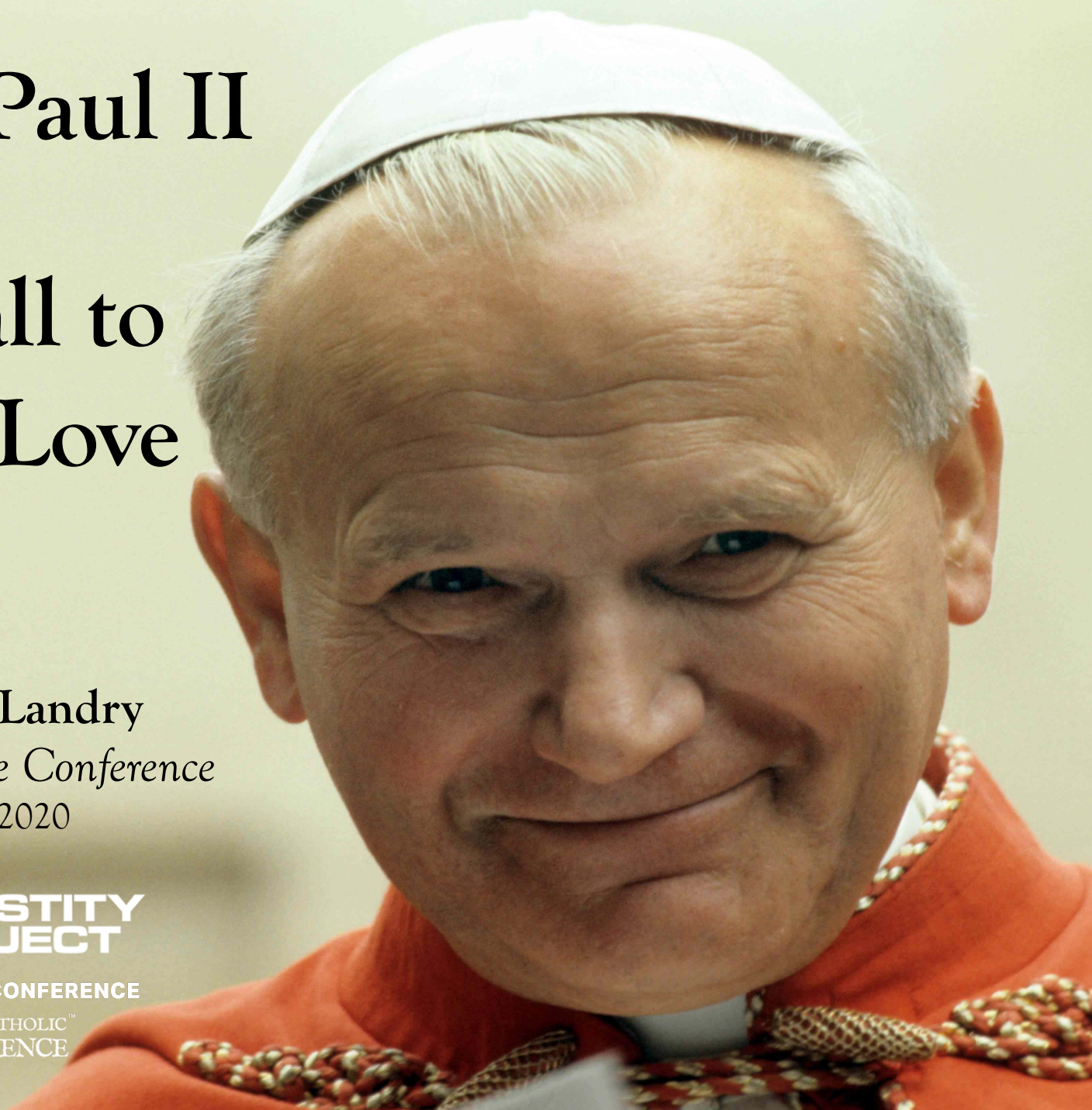
Fr. Roger J. Landry
Catholic Love Life Conference
May 22-24, 2020



**CHASTITY
PROJECT**

CATHOLIC LOVE LIFE CONFERENCE

Hosted by **VIRTUAL CATHOLIC™
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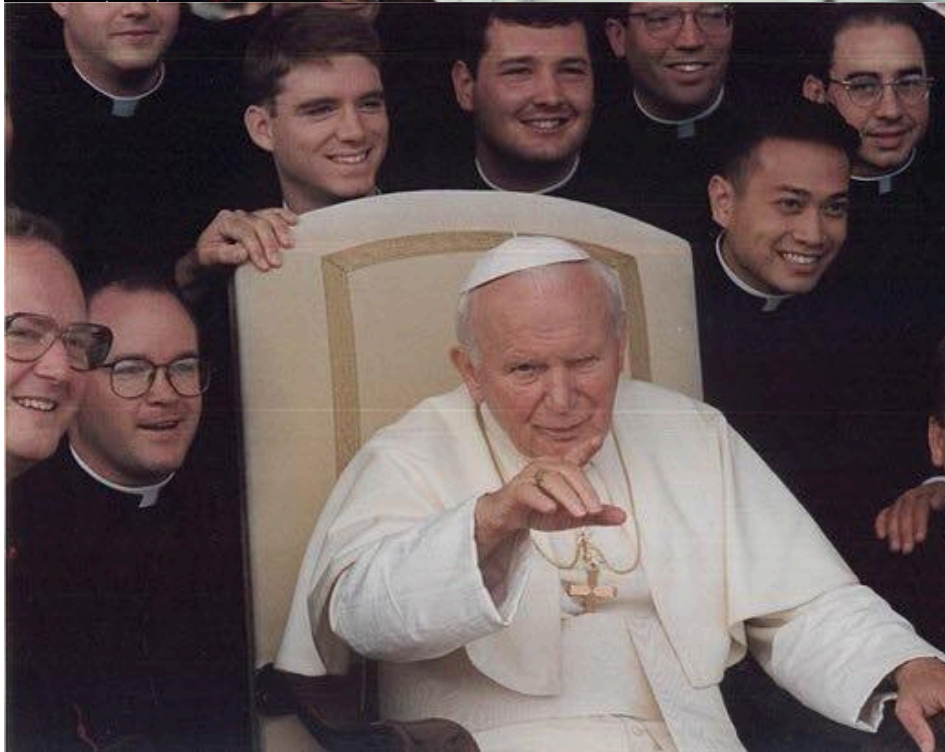
John Paul II's 100th Birthday

- On May 18, we have celebrated the centenary of the birth of St. John Paul II.
- To celebrate the life of a saint means to try to learn from him or her how to love Jesus and others and to imitate what we can.
- During this Catholic Love Life Conference, we can learn a lot from him about where human love fits into God's plan for us and others, how to find that love and how to live it.

Knowing John Paul II

- I had the great privilege to know him.
- I was in Rome as a seminarian and a priest from 1995-2000, where in addition to attending the John Paul II Institute for the Studies of Marriage and Family, I had the joy to go to over 100 liturgies and general audiences with him.
- I had the privilege to be his incense bearer, lector for the Easter Vigil, concelebrate with him in his private chapel and proclaim the Gospel to him, and speak with him 11 times.
- I was able to thank him in person for his teachings on Love and Responsibility and the theology of the body.









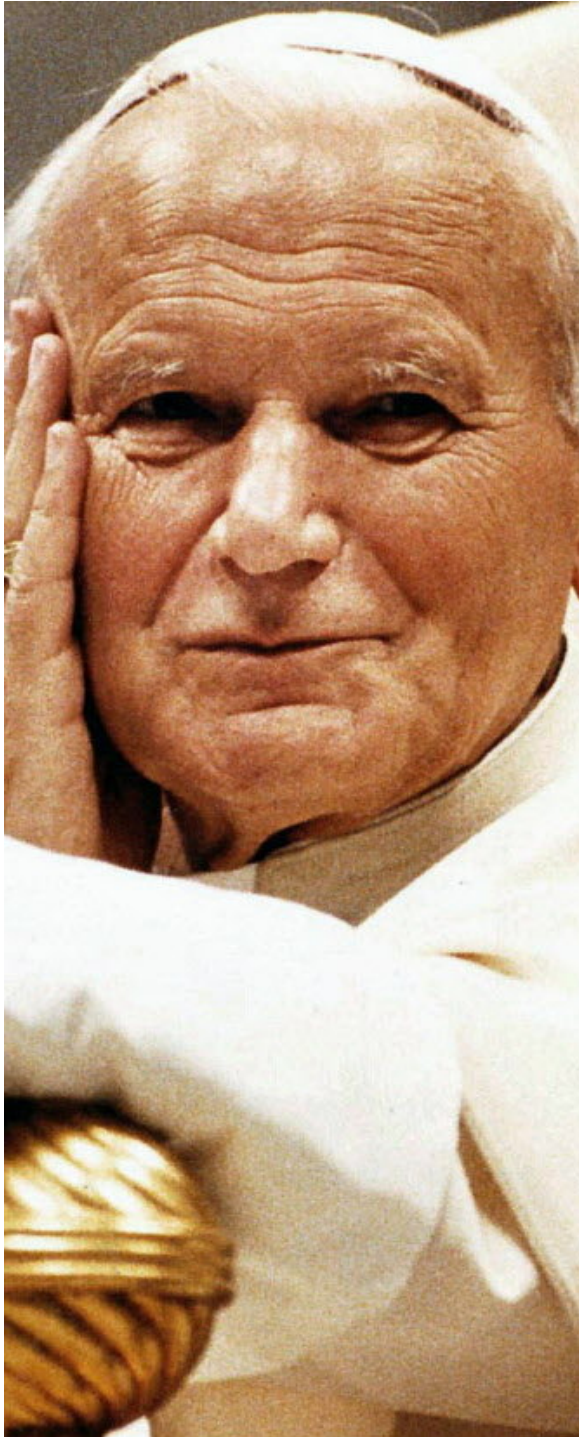
John Paul II's Call Within a Call

- He said in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994) that he “felt almost an inner call” from early in his priesthood to help young people live their vocation to love, by helping them to learn from Christ.
- “As a young priest,” he said, “I learned to love human love. This has been one of the fundamental themes of my priesthood — my ministry in the pulpit, in the confessional and also in my writing.”
- He wrote as Pope, “Man cannot live without love. ... His life is senseless if ... he does not find love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.”

Helping People to Love

- He said that young people “need guides and want them close at hand.”
- He sought to be that guide.
 - University Chaplain in Krakow
 - Professor in Lublin
 - Leading groups of young people on hikes into the beautiful Polish mountains.
 - Teaching and Writing *Love and Responsibility* (1958-1960) as well as various plays on the theme of human love.
 - Catecheses on Human Love in the Divine Plan, a.k.a, the “Theology of the Body (1979-1984)
 - World Youth Days
 - Always meeting with young people in Rome and on his 104 international trips.





Why Chastity is So Important?

- The opposite of love is not hatred, but *lusting after* others and *using* them.
 - Love is willing the good of another for the other's sake.
 - The greatest love is giving one's life for one's friends (Jn 15:13).
 - Lust, he says, changes the "intentionality" of a person from a giver to a taker, from someone who sacrifices oneself for the loved one's good to someone who sacrifices the other for one's gratification.
- Chastity neutralizes lust and keeps love loving.
- In *Love and Responsibility*, he said that he wanted to "introduce love into love."



Chastity and Holiness

- The big project of his papacy was to promote the universal call to holiness, that all of us, no matter our age or state in life, are called to be saints.
- Sanctity means to become like God as his image and likeness, to be holy as he is holy, to love like he loves.
- St. Paul tells us clearly: “This is the will of God, your holiness” (1 Thess 4:3). But then he says immediately after: “that you abstain from *porneia*” (v.4), a Greek term that refers to all sexual sin and is generally translated as unchastity.
- To become a saint, *we have to be chaste*: Sanctity is the perfection of love and we can't love without chastity!

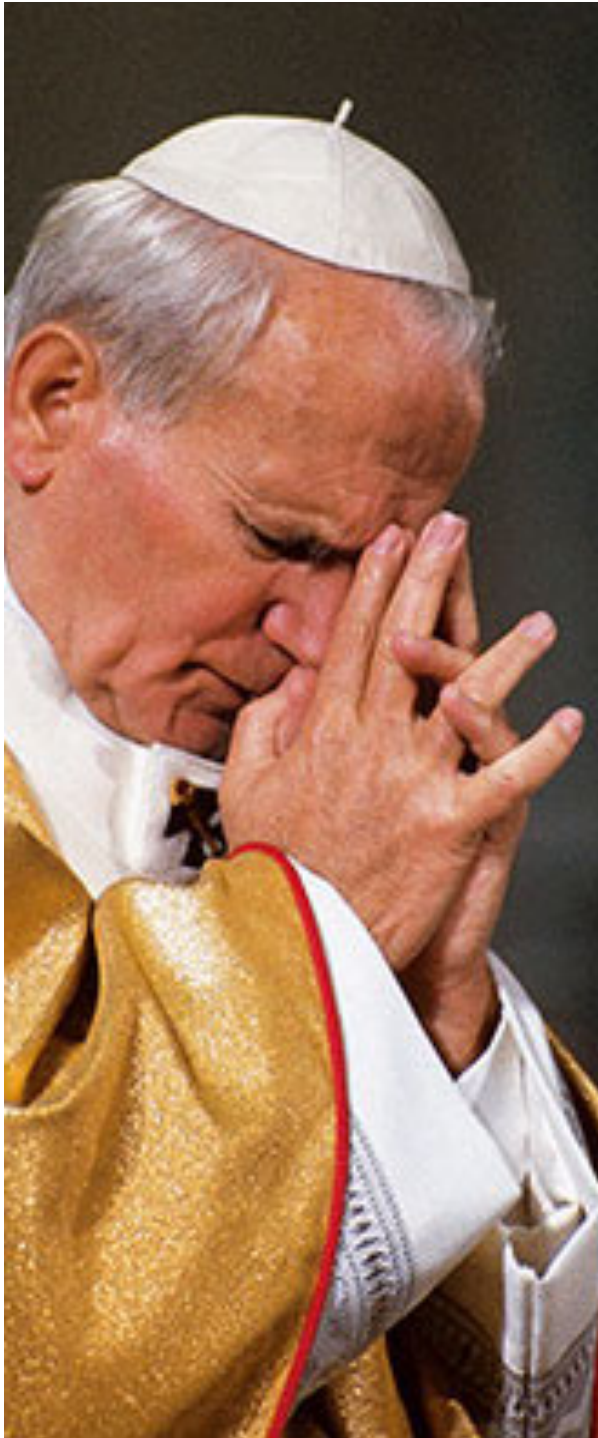


Chastity is Countercultural

- Probably no part of Catholic faith and life is as caricatured, contradicted, criticized, condemned, calumniated and contravened as Catholic moral teaching on chastity.
- Many view the Church's teaching as something as outdated as Victorian clothing, as the path to repression rather than love, as a school of freaks rather than saints.
- They charge it's against our biology, by shackling a natural urge. It's against our rational nature, by restraining our freedom. It's even against God's plans for us, by impeding the life of joy he intends.
- In short, they regard the Church's teachings on chastity as Bad News instead of Good.
- But has the culture that trumpets the right to sex with whomever we want, whenever we want, wherever we want, however we want brought us happiness? Or heartache?

What Chastity is Not

- Many people, including Catholics, are confused by the term chastity.
- When the Catechism emphasizes that “all Christ’s faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life,” and that “married people are called to live conjugal chastity,” many married couples are left scratching their heads, wondering how they can be both “chaste” and start a family.
- The confusion can stem from misunderstanding what “chastity” means when used in Catholic sexual education training as well as when used to refer to the vows professed by religious and priests.
 - Chastity is not the same thing as **continence**, which involves abstinence from sexual activity.
 - Chastity is not the same thing as **celibacy**, which means the state of being unmarried.
 - Those who are unmarried are called to *chaste continence or abstinence*.
 - Religious are called to *chaste celibate continence*.



What Chastity is



- The Catechism of the Catholic Church links chastity chiefly to the virtue of **temperance** (moderation or self-control).
 - “The fruit of spiritual effort”
 - “Apprenticeship in self-mastery”
 - “Governing one’s passions” rather than letting oneself “be dominated by them.”
 - The goal is the “successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.”
- This is the traditional understanding of chastity, which is mainly linked to continence or restraining one’s sexual urge.



What Chastity is

- John Paul II did not think that moderating the sexual urge was enough. We need to orient it appropriately so that it brings about communion, rather than merely stops it from destroying communion.
- In *Love and Responsibility*, he said that chastity is linked to love. Chastity, he wrote, is the moral habit that raises one's attractions to another to the dignity of that person as a whole.
 - There is a temptation to “reduce” others to the values of the body or specific body parts.
 - There's also the temptation to “use” another — in one's mind or physically — for one's own sensual or emotional gratification.
 - Many people in our culture consensually use each other sexually in this way. This mutual utilitarianism, however, is not love, but the opposite of love.



What Chastity is

- In his Theology of the Body, John Paul II went even further in his teaching on chastity.
- He linked it first to the virtue of *purity*.
 - “Blessed are the pure of heart,” Jesus taught, “for they shall see God.”
 - Purity allows us to see God in others, to recognize a reflection of the image of God, to see something of Love incarnate, of the divine giver.
- He then linked it to the virtue of *piety*.
 - Piety is the good habit that helps us, once we have seen God in others, to revere them out of reverence for God.
 - St. Paul wrote to husbands and wives, “Be subordinate to each other out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21).
 - Linked to piety, chastity helps us to see the other as sacred subject instead of a sexual object.

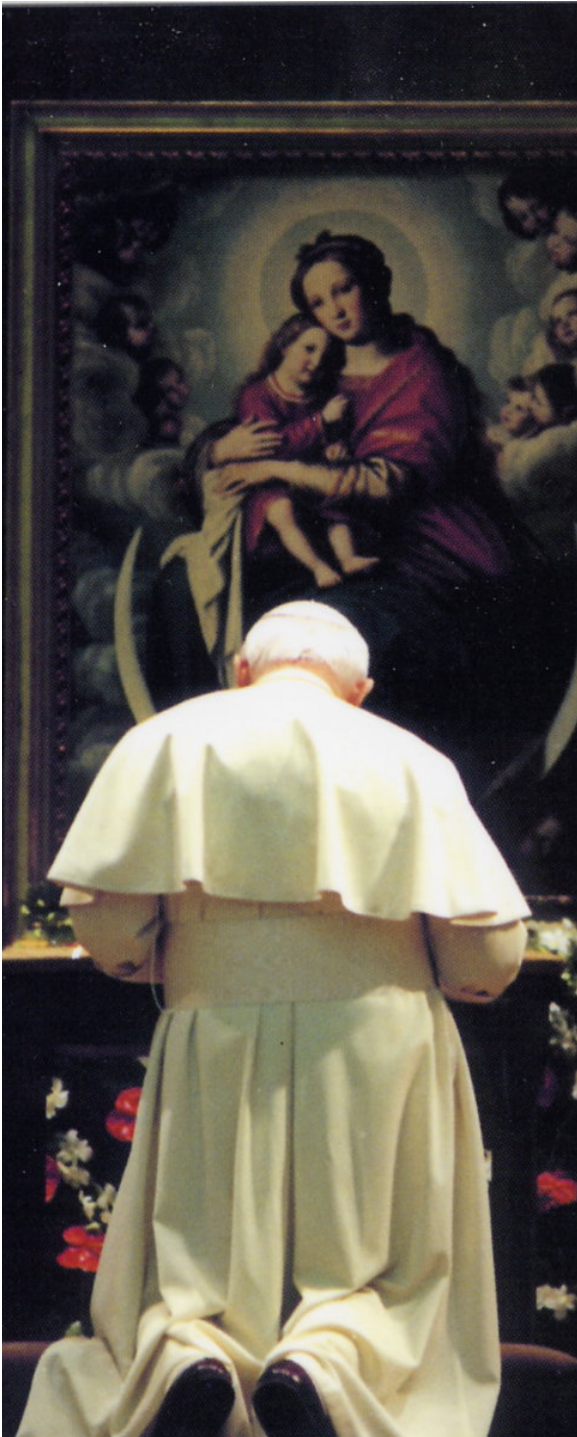


What Chastity is

- So chastity is connected to all four virtues: self-control, love, purity and piety.
- It's what helps to keep our *eros* (romantic love) capable of *philia* (love for friends) and *agape* (Christ-like love).
- Living chastely does not relegate others to a “loveless life,” but provides the conditions for the possibility of any true love!

Chastity in Marriage

- Husbands and wives are called to chastity in their marriage.
 - Reverence each other as sacred gift
 - Raise attractions to the good of the person as a whole, including the soul.
 - Fully accept the paternal meaning of man's masculinity and the maternal meaning of women's femininity, which are rejected in the use of contraception.
 - Avoid "adultery of the heart" (Mt 5:27-28) but look at each other with purity, piety and love.





Chastity Outside Marriage

- All those who are unmarried are called to chastity.
 - Pornography, masturbation, fornication, oral sex and other practices are inconsistent with the one's and the others' genuine good – and with treating oneself and others with the reverence befitting a temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - Pornography or porno-vision, abstracting a person's sexual values from the person's overall good, is the opposite of chastity.
 - Fornication takes advantage of another to whom one has not made a total commitment for one's pleasure.
 - Same-sex activity rejects the meaning of masculinity or femininity and the natural ordering toward the gift of life.
- The only context in which lust is avoided is whether there's a commitment to the total person and good of the other and a mutual exchange of sexual gifts, not just momentarily (which can still be utilitarian), but without expiration date.
- Sexual activity is moral only when it is loving, not lustful. Love-making is truly loving only in a loving marriage, when couples express in body language the one-flesh union of mutual self-gifts brought about by God in the marriage of a man and one woman.

Growth in Chastity

- To grow in chastity, based on what John Paul II has taught us, we must work on growing in self-control, in sacrificial love, in purity and in piety toward God and others.
- But there are other traditional means can ponder.
 - Prayer
 - Spiritual self-discipline (like fasting)
 - Friendship
 - Service
 - Sacrament of Reconciliation and other help.
 - Avoid activities that foster unchastity
 - Don't live by the standards of the world but by Christ's standards.





John Paul II in Netherlands, 1985

- “Dear friends, allow me to be very frank with you. ... Are you really sure that the idea you have of Christ fully corresponds to the reality of his person?”
- “The Gospel, in truth, presents us with a *very demanding* Christ who invites us to a radical conversion of heart, to detachment from earthly goods, to the pardon of offenses, to the love of enemies, to the patient endurance of abuses, and even to the sacrifice of one’s life for love of neighbor.
- “In particular, concerning the sexual sphere, the firm position taken by him in defense of the indissolubility of marriage and the condemnation pronounced even regarding simple adultery of the heart are well known. And how can we fail to be struck by the precept to ‘gouge out one’s eye’ or ‘cut off one’s hand’ if these members are an occasion of ‘scandal.’
- “Having these precise Gospel references, is it realistic to imagine a *permissive Christ* in the realm of married life, in the question of abortion, of pre-marital, extra-marital or homosexual relations? ... In her teaching the Church never pronounces a judgment regarding concrete persons. But at the level of principles she must distinguish good from evil. Permissiveness doesn’t make man happy.”
- “Young friends, this then is my response: love Christ and accept the demands that the Church makes upon you in his name, because they are the demands that come from God, the Creator and Redeemer of man. Accept these demands in your lives and you will discover their value.”

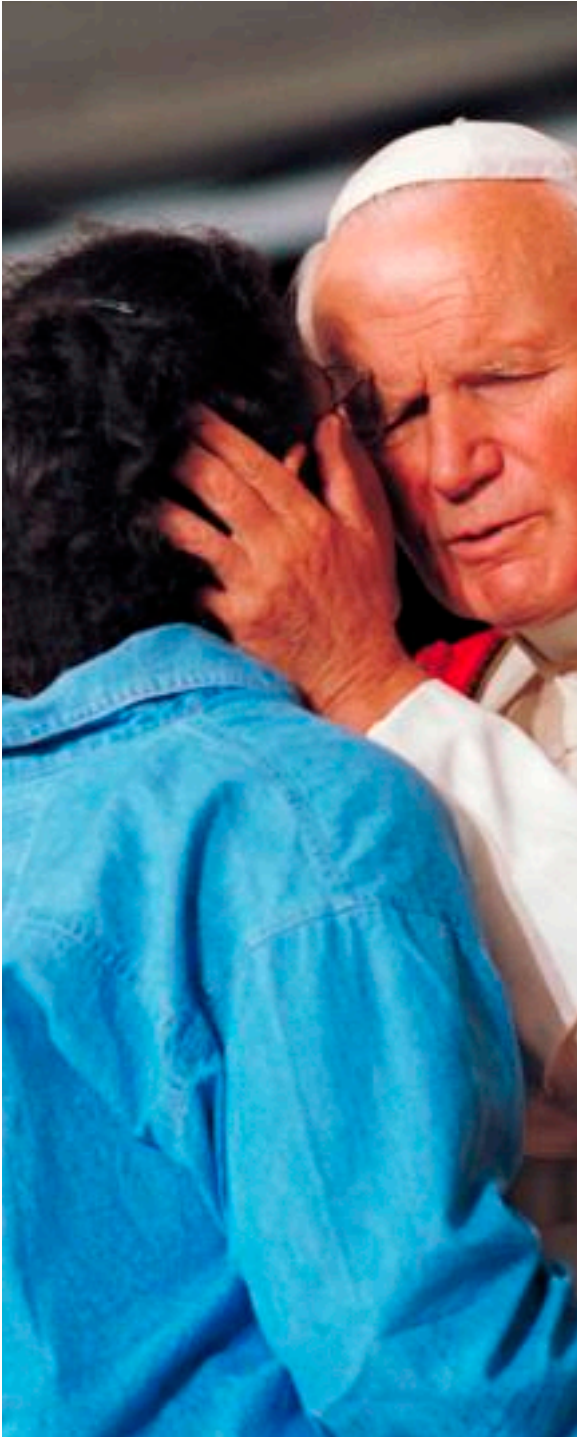
John Paul II to Youth



- “The heart of youth, ... one of the central questions of human life, ... is also one of the main biblical themes: the great sacrament of marriage [and] ... the experience of love.”
- “The call [to love] comes from God himself, who created man ‘in his own image and likeness’ precisely ‘as man and woman.’
- “I ask you not to break off your conversation with Christ in this extremely important phase of your youth [but] ... to commit yourselves even more.
- “When Christ says ‘Follow me,’ ... very often [his call] means: ‘Follow me,’ the Bridegroom of the Church who is my bride; come, you too become the bridegroom of your bride, you too become the bride of your spouse. Become sharers in that mystery, that Sacrament, which the Letter to the Ephesians says is something great ‘in reference to Christ and the Church.’
- “Much depends on the fact that you follow Christ on this path, that you do not flee from him, when you are occupied with this matter that you rightly consider the great event of your heart.

John Paul II to Youth

- “To set out on the path of the married vocation means to learn married love day by day, year by year: love according to soul and body.
- “It is precisely this love that you young people need if your married future is to ‘pass the test’ of the whole of life.
- “Many times in my life it has been my task to accompany in a sense more closely this love of young people. I have come to understand just how essential, ... how important and how great it is.
- “To a large extent *the future of humanity is decided along the paths of this love*, initially youthful love, which you and she, you and he discover along the paths of your youth.
- “This can be called a great adventure, but it is also a great task.”



Concluding Thoughts



- Since the future of humanity is decided along the path of this love, we see how important chastity is not only for individuals hoping one day to get married for better or worse, in poverty or prosperity, in sickness and health, all their days, but for the future of humanity.
- Chastity is essential
 - for love, for self-respect and for true concern for others.
 - for happy marriages.
 - for happy priestly and religious vocations.
 - for holiness.
 - And therefore for heaven, to which love, the sacrament of marriage, holy orders and religious life, and holiness all lead!
- That's why the Church today, following the extraordinary leadership of St. John Paul II, continues to proclaim the Call to Chaste Love today.

For the Slides of this Talk

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the website [catholicpreaching.com](http://www.catholicpreaching.com). The header features a gold cross logo and the text "Catholic Preaching" with "Fr. Roger J. Landry, Diocese of Fall River" underneath. A small photo of Fr. Landry is in the top right. A navigation menu includes Home, Homilies, Articles, Plan of Life Book, Retreats, Teaching, and Biography. A search bar is present. The main content area has a "Welcome!" section with a warm greeting and a quote from Cardinal Edmund Szoka. Below this is a "Most Recent" section with three columns: "Most Recent Homilies", "Most Recent Articles", and "Most Recent Talks".

Home Homilies Articles Plan of Life Book Retreats Teaching Biography

Search this website ... Search

Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

*"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach."*

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Fr. Roger J. Landry

Most Recent Homilies	Most Recent Articles	Most Recent Talks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bearing Fruit Attached to the Vine, 12th Wednesday (II), June 27, 2018▪ Following the Lead of the Precursor, Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 2018▪ Placing Our Heart and Treasure in God, 11th Friday (II), June 22, 2018▪ Longing to See God's Face in Prayer and in Others, 10th Friday (II), June 15, 2018▪ The Surpassing Righteousness of Christ-like Merciful Love, 10th Thursday (II), June 14, 2018▪ Greatest in the Kingdom, 10th Wednesday (II), June 13, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Secular Push to Get Priests to Break the Seal, The Anchor, June 29, 2018▪ Approaching the Suicide Surge with Honesty and Resolve, The Anchor, June 15, 2018▪ The Abortion Exception to the Practice of Discrimination, The Anchor, June 1, 2018▪ The Contemporary Attack on Motherhood, The Anchor, May 18, 2018▪ The Euthanasia of Alfie Evans, The Anchor, May 4, 2018▪ "Do Not Be Afraid of Holiness," The Anchor, April 20, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Church and International Diplomacy, Acton University, June 20, 2018▪ The Entrepreneurial Vocation, Acton University, June 20, 2018▪ The Social Teaching of Pope St. John Paul II, Acton University, June 20, 2018▪ The Necessity and Art of Trinitarian Prayer, Catholic Medical Association Boot Camp, June 18, 2018▪ Christ, the Redeemer of Marriage: Living and Proclaiming the Gospel of the Sacramentality of Marriage at a Time When Sex, Love,

St. John Paul II

Pray for us!

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