

Friday of the 21st Week of the Year
August 26, 2011 8:30am

Our Catholic Catechism speaks of the virtue of chastity.

This is a virtue that is intended for all of us – married, single, celibate, vowed religious, everyone.

Obviously, it gets lived out differently depending on our vocation or state in life.

The Catechism says: “Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and then our inner unity in our bodily and spiritual being.”

Saint Paul’s exhortation in our first reading this morning leads me to reflect on this important Christian virtue.

Paul calls us to refrain from immorality in our relationships and to approach one another, as he says, not in a lustful way but with holiness and honor.

I know that a lot could be said about this virtue.

One of our contemporary Catholic spiritual writers boils it down to two observations or norms.

First, chastity means that our external expressions of sexuality will be under the control of love, with care and full awareness of the other person.

In other words, our sexual expression is not to be just a me-centered or self-centered act.

It must be part of real love for the other person.

It must include an awareness of and care for what is good for the other.

And second, chastity means that there is to be honesty in sex.

Our physical relationships must truly express the level of personal commitment we have with the other person.

This is why our Church has always taught that sexual expression is to be restricted to the committed relationship of marriage.

The expression there matches the level of complete and enduring commitment that is at least presumably present.

So, Saint Paul leads me this morning to reflect a bit with you on this important Christian virtue of chastity – a virtue for all of us.