

REFLECTION

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It may look that way, but the answer is definitely, No. It can never be a lost cause. In fact, things are getting more exciting in this area. Let's face this crisis with great optimism.

And the reason for that is precisely the very same reason why many of us are pushed to think chastity is already a lost cause. The complex and seemingly impossible challenges, the ugliness of the situation has made this virtue more important, more relevant, more desirable.

As to whether chastity can still be achieved and lived in a stable way, you can be sure that it can. Surprises can happen. Miracles do happen. While we have to do everything we can, let's remember that God is always in the middle of things. If Christ was able to resurrect a dead man, the recovery of chastity in a person and in society is nothing compared to that!

Yes, it's true that we cannot and should not underestimate the gravity of the problem. Pornography is everywhere and is easily accessible. Even kids as young as 8 can get it in a click. One can avail of it with apparent impunity. In fact, one can avail of it also with apparent great benefits, or so they say.

We have a good number of people, especially the young, who are already crazed with sex. Cases of sexual addiction are increasing by leaps and bounds, and not everything in this regard is reported yet.

Marital infidelity is still like a byword among many people. Flings, one-night stands, hook-ups are getting common. We now have the same-sex marriage issue. You can just imagine what goes inside the mind and heart of many people, and the solitary abuses people commit right and left in thought, desire, word and deed.

Yet, in spite of all these, there is still hope. We just have to be realistic, and that should start with a boost to our faith that with Christ, who already died for our sins, the impossible can be made possible.

Which means that we have to feel at home with the reality that in this life we are expected to do the impossible—with God's grace. If you think that nothing works unless it is under your control or power, be convinced that you are wrong. We have to enliven our life of faith and piety. This is the indispensable minimum.

There is no use complaining, feeling bad, getting pessimistic and depressed. We have to move, and move forward. But we have to redefine the terms of engagement. We should not get stuck with those of the past generations that may have worked well before, but now no more.

With the many new developments around, the personal, family, social terrain, etc., has changed drastically. Where topics like the nature and meaning of human sexuality and the need and practicability of chastity were a no-no before, now they should be openly discussed. We have to overcome the initial shyness and shame that are now quite misplaced if we have to consider how things are now.

The way and manner of doing this should also be changed. Let's avoid lecturing and preaching, because many young people today feel they are being spat upon when Scripture is quoted or some scientific or social data are cited.

Things have to be done in a more friendly way. A lot of patience is needed as well as creativity and a large dose of naturalness. We have to somehow talk like them, with jokes, anecdotes and entertaining trivias galore. Let's be wary with being too intellectual. The young ones resent that.

Let's never be shocked to hear the most scandalous things related to this area. In fact, we should always be reassuring them that things will just be all right. But we also have to be ready to give concrete, doable steps to recommend to them. We should not expect that things radically change overnight.

Let's be quick to see the brighter side of things, instead of getting stuck with the negative details. You can be sure that there will always be some redeeming elements in the apparent oceanic mess people can get into. And it's love, affection, understanding and compassion that will win at the end of the day.

Chastity should be presented as a very positive virtue, a true manifestation of love and a basic truth about us. It should be presented as something doable but requiring daily effort and daily struggles where one can win and lose, but hope is always there. It has to be understood as a consequence of faith and piety.