

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

You know, my brethren, what the sixth Commandment forbids: it forbids, you tell me, immodest words and actions, and all that would tarnish the holy virtue of purity. You also know that the ninth Commandment forbids all immodest thoughts and desires, and wilful pleasure in them.

Thus these two commandments proscribe everything contrary to chastity: the one, exterior acts; the other, thoughts or interior acts.

The sixth Commandment forbids (1) every exterior act of impurity, such as immodest discourse, looks, touches, and other actions; (2) all the occasions which lead to impurity: bad companions, too frequent interviews and familiarity between persons of different sex, round dances, immodest dressing, immodest comedies and plays, bad songs, books, and papers.

The ninth Commandment forbids all interior sins; that is to say, thoughts and desires contrary to purity. We sin by impure thoughts when we take pleasure in immodest imaginations and voluntarily entertain them; we sin by impure desires when we wish to commit bad actions and satisfy our passions, even though no exterior act should follow.

Every sin of impurity is mortal when there is full consent. A simple immodest thought constitutes a mortal sin when we voluntarily consent to it. On the contrary, if we in no wise consent to it and resist it, there is no sin. Hence the maxim, the sin does not consist in experiencing the temptation, but in consenting to it.

To resist immodest thoughts, we must at once turn our mind from them and have recourse to prayer, invoking, for example, the names of Jesus and Mary.

Chaste Christians cast away all evil thoughts on first observing them, as they would a spark of fire falling on their hand.

Let us have, my brethren, a profound detestation for this sin, the most revolting, the most abasing of all sins, the opprobrium of the Christian, the pest of souls, the triumph of hell: this detestation will be our safeguard. And would you render this means fully efficacious, unite to it a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to her Immaculate Conception.

And besides, let those well remember who are unhappily enslaved to this vice, that without sacrifices and generous efforts they will not break their ignominious chains, according to these words of the Saviour: This kind of demon is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.

We sin against the sixth or ninth Commandment by every immodest act, be it exterior or interior; in other words, we sin against purity by thoughts, looks, actions, as also by obscene words and songs. This last form of impurity is called impurity of speech, immodest words.

Let us to-day briefly consider it. Immodest words constitute an abominable sin and are most disastrous to morality. Evil communications, says the Apostle, corrupt good manners. It is an abominable sin with respect to God, since the very tongue which has been sanctified by the body and blood of Jesus Christ in holy Communion is employed as means of outraging Jesus Christ by the most foul of vices.

It is an abominable sin with respect to our neighbour, because it is the cause of scandal. The obscene tongue is truly an incendiary torch, kindling the fire of impurity in a multitude of hearts. The impure mouth is like unto an unclean cesspool from which issue forth deadly gases.

It is an abominable sin with respect to the sinner himself; for, besides the sins of which he is guilty before God, he defames himself publicly before men. From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and by uttering or singing obscenities the libertine defiantly says, Behold me : I am an impure man.

Now, my brethren, what is to be your sentiment as regards immodest speech ?

Have always a horror of this abominable vice; never let words fall from your lips that are ever so little susceptible of an immodest interpretation. There are some who say, "I hold such discourse, but without any malice, for amusement or for simple pleasantry."; What! do you pretend to amuse by outraging modesty, by murdering souls? What would you say if one struck you with a dagger, saying that he did it only for amusement?

Fly, fly impure speech ! it is a pest. Fathers and mothers, watch; masters and mistresses, watch; know your duties and your responsibility. Do not permit licentious conversations or songs in your homes, in your workshops, if you do not wish to draw down on you the malediction of God in time and in eternity.

If there are any who have had the misfortune to commit this sin, let them sincerely repent, let them repair the scandal they have given, and let them cast themselves at the feet of the Immaculate Virgin to obtain the grace of never again falling.