

Standards Of Modesty

And Prayers For Purity

By some Concerned Catholics.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO WOMAN - from a Man.

I am a man. I am your father, your brother, your husband, your lover... your friend. I WANT you to be what you ought to be: a personification of gentleness, understanding, receptivity, loyalty and love.

But while you ask me to regard you as more than a mere sexual object, do not prohibit my doing so by distorting your womanhood. Do not provoke me carelessly with your sexuality if you will resent my responding. Do not be random in giving the treasure of physical intimacies and then expect me to value you more than you value yourself. Do not, especially when we are with others, abandon that modesty that in-dwells your nature, for I depend on you to be my touch-stone of moderation. Do not use crude speech, and mock my efforts to make my words to you respectful. Do not applaud the public vulgarities of those who, in the name of artistic expression, disclose their contempt of women and depict you as a slattern. Do not be fooled by the exploiters who would convince you that femininity is weakness and virtue is retardation. You are strongest when you are most feminine; you progress when you embrace virtue. Remember that I will accept you at your own evaluation of yourself, and if you do not respect the sublime beauty of your womanhood, you cannot ask me to.

I will spend much of my life in concern for your welfare; I will want to provide for you, to protect you, to accept your love and give you mine, for it is only in uniting with you and doing these things that my life becomes truly meaningful.

So, uphold my image of woman, that I may more easily be the man you want me to be.

(John S. Niendorff)

AN OPEN LETTER TO MAN – from a woman.

I am a woman. I am your wife, sweetheart, mother, daughter, sister, friend.

I need your help.

I was created to give to the world gentleness, understanding, serenity, beauty, and love.

I'm finding it increasingly difficult to fulfill my purpose; many people in advertising, motion pictures, television, and radio have ignored my inner qualities, and have repeatedly used me only as a symbol of sex.

This humiliates me, destroys my dignity, prevents me from being what you want me to be ...an example of beauty, inspiration, and love ...for my children, my husband, and of my God and country.

I need your help to restore me to my true position, to enable me to fulfill the purpose for which I was created.

I know you will find a way.

(Composed by Sy and Jill Miller.)

THE MARYLIKE STANDARDS FOR MODESTY IN DRESS.

"A dress cannot be called decent which is cut deeper than two fingers breadth under the pit of the throat; which does not cover the arms at least to the elbows; and scarcely reaches a bit beyond the knees. Furthermore, dresses of transparent materials are improper." — The Cardinal-Vicar of Pope Pius XI.

1. Marylike is modest without compromise, "like Mary," Christ's Mother.
2. Marylike dresses have sleeves extending at least to the elbows; and skirts reaching below the knees.

(NOTE: Because of impossible market conditions, quarter-length sleeves are temporarily tolerated with Ecclesiastical Approval, until Christian womanhood again turns to Mary as the model of modesty in dress.)

1. Marylike dresses require full coverage for the bodice, chest, shoulders, and back; except for a cut-out about the neck not exceeding two inches below the neckline in front and in back, and a corresponding two inches on the shoulders.
2. Marylike dresses do not admit as modest coverage transparent fabrics — laces, nets, organdy, nylons, et cetera — unless sufficient backing is added. However, their moderate use as trimmings is acceptable.
3. Marylike dresses avoid the improper use of flesh-colored fabrics.
4. Marylike dresses conceal rather than reveal the figure of the wearer; they do not emphasize, unduly, parts of the body.
5. Marylike dresses provide full coverage, even after jacket, cape or stole are removed.

"Marylike" fashions are designed to conceal as much of the body as possible, rather than reveal. This would automatically eliminate such fashions as tight slacks, jeans, sweaters, shorts which do not reach down to the knees: sheer blouses and sleeveless dresses: et cetera. The Marylike standards are a guide to instill a "sense of modesty." A girl who follows these, and looks up to Mary as her ideal and model, will have no problem of modesty in dress. She will not be an occasion of sin or source of embarrassment or shame to others.

Make a copy of this little guide to Marylike fashions and keep it with you at all times to use as a guide when buying clothes. Make sure that you purchase only garments which meet the Marylike Standards. "Be Marylike by being modest — be modest by being Marylike."

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY FOR PURITY.

Oh, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Virgin Most Pure, mindful of the terrible moral dangers threatening on all sides, and aware of my own human weakness, I voluntarily place myself, body and soul, this day and always, under your loving maternal care and protection.

I consecrate to you my body, with all its members, asking you to help me never to use it as an occasion of sin to others. Help me to remember that my body is "The Temple of the Holy Ghost," and to use it according to God's Holy Will, for my own personal salvation, and the salvation of others.

I consecrate to you my soul, asking you to watch over it, and to bring it home safe to you and to Jesus in Heaven for all eternity.

O Mary, my Mother, all that I am, all that I have is yours. Keep me and guard me under your mantle of mercy, as your personal property and possession.

"Jesus, Mary, I love you; save souls!"

"O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to You."

IMPRIMATUR: Albert R. Zuroweste.

Bishop of Belleville, Illinois.

Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1956.

TO SAFEGUARD YOUR PURITY.

With the grace of God, the virtue of purity is obtained by vigilance and the formation of good habits. To safeguard our purity is part and parcel of learning self-control. All means that can strengthen the will are to be encouraged, whether natural or supernatural, for example, avoiding bad company, praying. Anything that weakens the will is to be avoided. Countless souls down the ages have preserved and protected THIS NOBLE VIRTUE by the following means:

1. Receive Holy Communion often with great devotion and reverence.
2. Go to Confession regularly, at least once a month but if possible every two weeks or even weekly.
3. Have a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, Mary Immaculate. Say your three Hail Marys morning and night. In temptation, call earnestly on Our Divine Lord, Our Blessed Lady and Saint Joseph. Imitate Our Lady's modesty in dress, speech and behavior.
4. Avoid people whose conduct offends purity and whose conversation is impure (off-color stories, double-meaning jokes, et cetera.). Avoid suggestive comics, magazines, books and especially avoid bad television, films and videos.
5. Much modern pop music is designed to demoralize by rousing the passions through its beat and suggestive words. Avoid this along with all licentious discos and improper dancing.
6. Always remember that intemperate use of alcohol, and of course drugs, is certainly a near occasion of sins of impurity. (It is also a sin of intemperance.)
7. Develop various interests for your spare time, such as... good reading, art, painting, or learn a musical instrument, have a useful hobby, do gardening, et cetera.
8. Pray to the Patrons of Purity – Saint Joseph, Saint Dominic Savio, Saint Maria Goretti, your Guardian Angel and others.

Here is a useful prayer:

O Saint Maria Goretti, who, strengthened by God's grace, did not hesitate, even at the age of eleven, to shed your blood and sacrifice life itself to defend your virginal purity, deign to look graciously on the unhappy human race which has strayed far from the path of eternal salvation. Teach us all, and especially our youth, the courage and promptness to flee for love of Jesus, anything that could offend Him or stain our souls with sin. Obtain for us from Our Lord and Our Lady Immaculate, victory in temptation, comfort in the sorrows of life, and the grace which we earnestly beg of you, purity in soul and body, so that we may one day enjoy with you the imperishable glory of heaven. Amen.

Short Prayers to repeat in time of temptation.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to You.

My Jesus, Mercy!

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I love You, save souls.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Your Holy Wounds.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in You!

Words from Saint Francis de Sales regarding Modesty.

“Be neat, Philothea; let nothing be negligent about you. It is a kind of contempt of those with whom we converse, to frequent their company in uncomely apparel; but, at the same time, avoid all affectation, vanity, curiosity, or levity in your dress. Keep yourself always, as much as possible, on the side of plainness and modesty, which, without doubt, is the greatest ornament of beauty.”

– Saint Francis de Sales, Introduction to a Devout Life, Part Third, Chapter 13.

“Frequent not the company of immodest persons, especially if they be also impudent, as is generally the case;... these corrupted souls and infected hearts scarcely speak to any, either of the same or a different sex, without causing them to fall in some degree from purity; they have poison in their eyes and in their breath, like basilisks. On the contrary, keep company with the chaste and virtuous; often meditate upon and read holy things; for the word of God is chaste, and makes those also chaste that delight in it.”

– Saint Francis de Sales, Introduction to a Devout Life, Part Third, Chapter 25.

Saint John Chrysostom.

Saint John Chrysostom instructed women of all times about dress when in the fourth century he declared:

"You carry your snare everywhere and spread your nets in all places. You allege that you never invited others to sin. You did not, indeed, by your words, but you have done so by your dress and your deportment.... When you have made another sin in his heart, how can you be innocent? Tell me, whom does this world condemn? Whom do judges punish? Those who drink poison or those who prepare it and administer the fatal potion? You have prepared the abominable cup, you have given the death dealing drink, and you are more criminal than are those who poison the body; you murder not the body but the soul. And it is not to enemies you do this, nor are you urged on by any imaginary necessity, nor provoked by injury, but out of foolish vanity and pride."

Relevant words from the Bible.

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity and kindness, goodness, trustfulness, mildness, faith, modesty, self-control, chastity."

Romans 12:1-2 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God."

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are."

1 Corinthians 11:10 "Therefore ought the woman to have a power (covering) over her head, because of the angels, (who are present in the assemblies of the faithful).

1 Timothy 2:9 "In like manner women also in decent apparel: adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with plaited hair or gold, or pearls or costly attire."

1 Corinthians 11:5 "But every woman praying or prophesying with her head not covered disgraces her head: for it is all one as if she were shaven."

1 Thessalonians 5:22 "From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves. And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you in all things; that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 19:26-27: "A man is known by his look, and a wise man, when you meet him, is known by his countenance. The attire of the body, and the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of the man, show what he is."

Saint Matthew (5:27-28) has the Words of our Lord:

You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that anyone who so much as looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
