

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B
1 Corinthians 6:13c-:15a, :17-:20

In our second reading today St. Paul makes several references to “immorality” that effects the body. It’s obvious that in the context of this book, the 1st Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul is talking about sexual sin, so that’s what I’m going to talk about today.

I am going to be talking about some sensitive stuff today, but I won’t use any sort of particularly graphic language. Those who are old enough to need to understand what I’m saying will, and parents will have the option of explaining things, or not, to those who are younger.

I should also point out that sometimes talking about sexual sin can lead people to think a negative attitude is being taken towards sexuality in general. Nothing could be further from the truth. Sexual sin is a serious matter because sex is so good and so holy. The reason we have the responsibility to be concerned about sexual sin, is because something so sacred is at stake.

Now I think if we’re going to have any kind of real understanding of human sexuality; either for the better, or in the context of it’s sinful misuse, we need to understand what St. Paul said near the end of our reading today when he made the claim “you are not your own.” When St. Paul says “you are not your own” that ultimately means that our bodies don’t belong to us. As soon as we lay claim to anything as really belonging to us, even our own lives, our own bodies, we’ve gone completely off track.

We aren’t our own, we belong to God. He gave us life, he determines what our life is all about. How we live is his call. What we make of ourselves is meant to be up to

him. The use we make of our bodies is supposed to be determined by his standards, not our decision.

This is basic and foundational when it comes to being Catholic. Anyone who wants to be in charge of their own life, and to set their own standards when it comes what they do with their body, has no real interest in being a Christian in any meaningful sense of the word. That's why St. Paul says anyone who commits a sexual sin "sins against his own body." Someone who commits a sexual sin, does what they want. But they've sinned against their own body, because ultimately the standard when it comes to what we do with our bodies is determined by God not by us.

That means no one has the right to sleep with someone they're not married to, it means no one has a right to view pornography, it means no one has a right to engage homosexual activity.

I could go on but you get the point.

If our lives come from God, if he gave us our bodies, then he's the one who knows what's best for us. He's the one who gets to set the pattern our lives are meant to follow.

Now if one failure on our part when it comes to sexual sin is the failure to recognize that God is in charge when it comes to our bodies, that he gets to set the standard and we don't, then another failure on our part is the inability to understand and take advantage of the forgiveness that God offers us when we fail sexually.

I'm going to make the safe assumption that every single one who has reached a certain stage in life has failed in this area to some extent. Pretty much everyone who is

old enough to understand what I'm talking about needs, or has needed, or will need God's forgiveness for some type of sexual sin.

Obviously there are degrees when it comes to how often we've sinned in this area, and exactly what sins we've committed, but whoever needs forgiveness for any type of sexual sin or for any number of sexual sins, can have it.

Anyone who regrets what they've done, is repentant, and has a sincere desire to break free of these sins can have God's forgiveness. We have the opportunity to confess. God gives us the sacrament of reconciliation, and he gives us the continuing grace and strength we need to change and live as he wants us to.

Whatever sins anyone here might need forgiveness for, that forgiveness is available.

On the one hand we can't accept the errors that are so common in our culture, a mindset that rejects God and acts as if we're in charge of our own bodies.

But also we need recognize God's love for us, his wisdom in directing how we use our bodies, and most importantly the forgiveness that is available if and when we fall short.