

Cycle B 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Sunday January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written about the year 56. Five years after he established a Christian community in this coastal town of Corinth. The Christians of Corinth were involved in a number of controversies, which threatened individual's eternal salvation, and were also causing division in the community of believers. Paul proceeded to address these matters one by one. As he did so, he identified and named the problem. Then he articulated the teaching that is rooted in the teaching of Jesus Christ that was handed on to him.

Paul tells us today, **“The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.”** St. Paul was addressing the sexual immorality that was taking place not only in Corinth, but in the Christian community as well. We must be honest and admit; that the same problem is occurring, not only in the culture and society but is also occurring in the Church, the Body of Christ. The content of the movies, television programs, print magazines in the checkout lines, and billboards, all devalue the body. The crisis is especially true regarding the internet because of pornography which **really** devalues the bodies of women, men and children, and has caused numerous sexual addictions with the accompanying social, psychological, and physical problems that we cannot even begin to place a number on. In short, **this crisis is first and foremost a spiritual sickness perpetrated by the devil.**

Culture and society will basically tell us that the body is for entertainment. If it feels good do it. For us as Catholic Christians however, we know that the human body is **created for holiness**. The many people who have been duped by the lies of the culture experience much misery and heartache. Whereas, those who strive to live a life of holiness through the body, experience **joy and happiness**.

Pope Saint John Paul II gave us a marvelous teaching and understanding of the God given beauty of the bodies of males and females called: Theology of the Body. John Paul had this to say: **“The human body includes right from the beginning... the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the person becomes a gift – and by means of this gift – fulfills the meaning of his being and existence.”** Just as St. Paul articulated a teaching for the people of his time, St. John Paul has articulated a teaching for the people of our time.

Right here in our own Archdiocese just 4 miles away Ruah Woods has developed a K through 12 curriculum for Theology of the Body which is part of our Religious Education System and Catholic School System. This method of teaching is very age appropriate. The lies of culture and society are a foundation built on sand. The truth of Theology of the Body is built on the rock foundation of the Scriptures.

St. Paul also teaches us today, **“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”** Since each one of us because of our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, not only do we reverence our own body we reverence the body of others. And this is important as we recall January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1973 45 years ago; and the Roe v Wade decision that essentially blocked any type of restrictions on abortion. Each unborn baby is a temple of the Holy Spirit because of their fully human body.

I once heard Father Bob Mick the brother of our Father Mick say the following in a Sunday Homily, **“If we want to end abortion then we need to end the misuse of sexuality.”** How true this statement is. St. Paul, St John Paul II and Father Bob Mick all understood that the body matters, that human sexuality is sacred and that we are made for more.

The content of this homily may be uncomfortable for some of us. Perhaps the place to start is with the example of Eli who instructed Samuel to reply: **“Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”** We must listen to the Lord, not our own personal preferences. Just as St. Paul clearly addressed the problems of his time we must also address the problems of our times. In doing so we are in fact, **“Glorify God in our bodies.”**