

## **Saint Raymond RCIA**

### **Life Issues, Sexuality & Society**

Before you watch the video teaching, take a minute to think....

- Who or what has influenced your choices in life?
- How do you know what is “right” and what is “wrong” in life?
- "...This is a hard saying; who can listen to it" (John 6:60). Have you encountered “hard teachings” in your journey as a Christian? How are you dealing with them?

The Word of God – What does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me?

*Deut 30:19-20* I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days ....

*Matthew 10:14-15* And if any one will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

*Matthew 16:18-19* And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

*1 Corinthians 6:9-11* "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The Foundation: Church as Teacher

*Why do we have a Church? What is the “purpose”?*

*Church as Mother - Church as Teacher*

The Church was given the authority by Jesus himself to define what is objectively sinful and what is not (based in both the Bible and the Hierarchy Jesus established with the Church; the role of Peter as a ‘Prime Minister’ who holds the keys and makes the decisions). When we start to make up our own rules according to our own preferences, we will most likely fall into mortal sin. There is a sound explanation in defense of every one of the Church’s moral teachings. These teachings can be challenging but they are not just recommendations that can be ignored. We should educate ourselves as to why the Church believes that certain behavior is immoral. The more we know about these issues, the better we can defend them and explain them to other people. It is our duty as Christians to foster morality in our society.

Struggling with a certain teaching is radically different than rejecting it. As Jesus says, “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”. *The Church has many publications explaining the reasons behind its most difficult moral teachings (www.catholic.com, www.beginningcatholic.com)*. We should read them to gain a greater understanding of the wisdom of God. We must ultimately accept them with the assent of faith. The Church has the divine authority to teach faith and morals in every age. (CCC 2032-2035)

## A Sampling of "The Issues"

### ABORTION

- 2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception....
- 2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.
- 2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense.
- 2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation:
- 2275 ...."It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."

### SICK & DYING

- 2276 Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.
- 2277 Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable....
- 2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.
- 2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

### TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY

- 2353 Fornication is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young.
- 2354 Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. It offends against chastity because it perverts the conjugal act, the intimate giving of spouses to each other. It is a grave offense. Civil authorities should prevent the production and distribution of pornographic materials.
- 2357 Homosexuality....Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered." They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.
- 2352 By masturbation is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. "Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a

constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action." ....

- 2376 Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral....
- 2391 Some today claim a "right to a trial marriage" where there is an intention of getting married later.....Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another.
- 2384 Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law....Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery:
- 2399 The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, direct sterilization or contraception).

### ECONOMIC JUSTICE

- 2432 Those responsible for business enterprises are responsible to society for the economic and ecological effects of their operations. They have an obligation to consider the good of persons and not only the increase of profits. Profits are necessary, however. They make possible the investments that ensure the future of a business and they guarantee employment.
- 2433 Access to employment and to professions must be open to all without unjust discrimination...
- 2434 A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice...
- 2439 Rich nations have a grave moral responsibility toward those which are unable to ensure the means of their development by themselves or have been prevented from doing so by tragic historical events....
- 2443 God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them...
- 2446 St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." "The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity"

### WAR & PEACE

- 2307 ....Because of the evils and injustices that accompany all war, the Church insistently urges everyone to prayer and to action so that the divine Goodness may free us from the ancient bondage of war.
- 2308 All citizens and all governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war. However, "as long as the danger of war persists and there is no international authority with the necessary competence and power, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed."

### Discussion with your Faith Partner

- IS YOUR HEAD SPINNING? *Take it slow...it will come in time; trust the Church as a teacher*
- Are there things from these Moral Teachings that surprise you?
- What questions do you still have (to be discussed next week)?