

THE CASE FOR PRESERVING VIRGINITY

I write as a gynaecologist who has worked in mission and public sector hospitals, and more recently with people living with HIV. My professional experience of the pain of so many people urges me to air an attitude to virginity which is different to that held by this culture. I am aware that what I am writing is not a view held by many in our culture now. That does not deter me, for truth has its own source in the Creator of the physical and moral laws of the universe. And please note: I refer to the virginity of men as well as women as I write!

The gift each of us receives of our virginity, simply by being human, is a precious and beautiful thing. It is precious, because it is a treasure, which holds the guarantee of our fertility and sexual health to offer to the one permanent spouse who wins our hearts. It is a wonderful protection of the fertility, which we bring to such a union – a freedom from the (often asymptomatic) sexually transmitted diseases, which rob us of fertility. It is the guarantee we can offer to our spouse and our children of their protection from dread diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis B.

But it is precious for more than physical reasons.

It is firstly a profound statement of belonging to only one person, a gift toward establishing an exclusive and deep and fitting intimacy, on which a safe and secure relationship can be built. That safety makes possible a level of transparency and openness, which brings further safety, security, joy and sexual fulfilment.

Secondly, that intimacy, security and safety builds an atmosphere of trust in which children can be most easily nurtured into a goodness, integrity and emotional and spiritual stability which will equip them to grow to be men and women of honour who bring joy to their parents. We each want that for our children!

The gift of our virginity held safe for the marriage bed is also a beautiful thing, because it states so very clearly the respect and honour in which we hold the spouse who eventually claims our heart. It is beautiful because it is free of the emotional complications of belonging to another, free of feelings of guilt about past behaviours, free of the awfulness of making comparisons in a depth of intimacy, which thrives best in exclusiveness. It is beautiful, because it proclaims the nobility of living with delayed gratification for selfless long-term goals in a culture, which is given over to short term gratification. It is a culture, which reduces sexuality to little more than lust – a culture helped on to this end by powerful electronic media and devices.

So what does this say to all those of us who have been seduced by such a culture into devaluing the gift of our virginity, who gave it away thoughtlessly, and know in our hearts we got it wrong? There is such a thing as secondary virginity, a change of mind and heart to restore its value, then to hold our sexuality secure for the right time, for that day of marriage. The rewards of such a decision can be very great.

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