

Teaching on the Sixth and Ninth Commandments

Lenten Meditation # 4

For Mar. 22nd 2006

By Father Jose Uppani.

Introduction

Our Lady of Fatima said: “More souls go to hell because of the sins of the flesh than for any other reason”. This is very true today than ever before.

Man has always failed to practice what he preaches. Even St. Paul testifies to this inherent weakness in man. But today he denies the preaching, the ideal itself. A cross-section of the popular movies and TV material reveals that traditional sexual morality is fast giving place to indecent conduct. The modern world looks upon sex as cheap, maudlin sentimentality. The modern romance portrays sex as merely a selfish outlet for passion. Supposedly learned men try to show that sins against sex are nothing serious. Countries that claim to be Christian are choose to remain passive witnesses without protest, to the pagan parade of the human body, the shrine of immortal life, the dwelling place of God, the temple of the soul for all eternity, as bait on stage, screen or billboard to amass money.. Even people who are responsible to teach others the moral values keep silence about sexual sins for fear of criticism or on flimsy excuse of violating others freedom!

But the outcome of this sexualized culture is not in any way beneficial to humanity. There is a shocking increase in the number of divorces. It is the suicide of the “one flesh “created by marriage. Divorce means the destruction of society’s most indispensable foundation, the family, and it will inevitably stamp the same destructive marks on society at large as it already has done on its immediate victims, millions of children. This sexualized culture has obvious and radical health hazards also: the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, now afflicting over half of all sexually active people, the fear of AIDS, and the rising infertility rate. The most notable physical effect of the Sexual Revolution is *death*. The human victims in one generation of the abortion holocaust in most Western nations vastly outnumber the victims of all the wars in their history. The permissive culture is based on a false premise of human freedom, which says every one is free to do what he wants. It doesn’t know that true human freedom is the freedom to do only what is morally good.

. We should not expect the Church’s teachings to coincide with “the wisdom of the world” (I Cor. 1:20) in any age or culture, for her teachings do not come from this world but from heaven, not from man but from God. Man has gone off the track, set for him by God; so God’s track has always appeared to fallen man as “a stone that will make them stumble, a rock that will make them fall” (I Pet. 2:8), just as Christ himself did.

G.K. Chesterton said: “I don’t need a church to tell me I’m wrong where I already know I’m wrong; I need a Church to tell me I’m wrong where I think I’m right” Therefore, we should not be ashamed of propagating Church’s teachings. The gospel was first preached to a permissive culture, and it won the day. The gospel can renew and purify our decadent culture and remove what increases the attraction to sin. God laments through the prophet Hosea: “My people perish for want of knowledge”. Hence we must reassert the gospel values so that we may elevate the morality of our culture and take the potential virtues in the human heart and make them blossom by restoring them to Christ.

Therefore let us earnestly study What God tells us about sexual morality in the Sacred Scripture and what is the Church's perennial teaching about it. The Bible says: "*but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I am holy."*" (I Pet 1:15-16). "*But you are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises" of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*" I Pet 2:9)

The 6th and 9th commandments ask us to be totally pure in all our acts, words, desires and thoughts. Because the human body is of the greatest dignity – it is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Basic principles of Catholic Sexual morality.

They include:

- God as the Creator and Designer of sexuality.
- The centrality of love and the need to get that right above all.
- The holiness of matter and the body, and procreation and sexual love as an image of divine love.
- The primacy of the family.
- The Church as the extension of Christ and her teaching authority as an extension of His;
- The divinely designed intrinsic purpose of sex as pro-creating new eternal souls for God's family;
- And above all, sex as a sign of the goodness of life. Every baby conceived is a sign that God has not given up man. God makes a soul when we make a body!

Sexuality as an image of God

• As soon as Scripture mentions "the image of God", it mentions sexuality: "*God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them*" Gen. 1:27). Sexuality is an image of God by being a reflection of the Trinity: as God is one yet three, spouses are two yet one. *Relationship* "goes all the way up" into divinity. Pope John Paul the Second's famous "Theology of Body" presents this beautifully:

"Human body images the invisible mystery of God

Body is a sacrament. The whole creation reveals something of the glory of God. If then, doesn't man created as male and female in the image and likeness of God, who is the crown of creation, reveal more the invisible mystery of God?

What is the mystery of God that is revealed by the body? - Inner Life of the Trinity. Life of the Holy Trinity is an eternal exchange of love. The union of man and woman in the intimacy of marital embrace image this eternal exchange of love of the Trinity. The sexual union itself, if properly understood is meant to be the icon, the symbol of the very inner life of God! That is why St. Paul calls this union of husband and wife a "great mystery".

Pope explains it thus: God stamps an image of his own love and communion right in our bodies as male and female.

Sixth and Ninth commandments forbid us not only from committing adultery but all abuses of human sexuality such as lust oriented sex in marriage, pre-marital sex, pornography, prostitution, rape, incest, homosexual acts, masturbation, etc.

Norms of chaste life according to particular state of life

VI & IX Commandments require all to live chastely, in emulation of Jesus Christ, according to a person's particular state of life and vocation:

- Single people, those in religious and vowed life abstain totally from sexual activity, for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven and give themselves to God alone (see CCC 2349)
- Married people are called to conjugal chastity by expressing their complete giving of self to each other in love, with every act of intercourse open to the conception of life.
- Those not yet married are to practice chastity, through “continence”, abstaining by God's grace from all that would arouse sexual passions and from all sexual activity.(see CCC 2349)
- Those engaged to be married also must live in continence. “They should reserve for marriage the expressions of love that belong to married love. They will help each other grow in chastity.” (see CCC 2350)

Today's culture devaluates the virtue of chastity, but the past experiences of human history warns us of the danger of lapses in practicing chastity. The Bible testifies to the total destruction brought about by impurity:

- The horrible punishment that David had to go through. David, about whom God said “A man after my own heart” (1 Sam 13:14). Even though David did much penance by fasting and praying for 7 days and 7 nights, God did not spare his child; God even retaliated by letting his own son Absalom rape his wives!
- The loss King Solomon had to bear due to his relationship with other women. He was dismissed from Kingship.
- Sodom-Gomorrah was burned in fire because of the sexual vulgarities of the people. (Gen 18 -19)

The severe punishment for impurity does not in any way show the cruelty of God; on the contrary it shows how much God respects the human body and dignified use of sexuality.

Dignity of the human body and sexuality is great

Bible gives a lot of statements that highlights the dignity of sex and the human body:

I Cor 6:13: “*The body, however, is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body;*”

I Cor 6:15: “*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take Christ's members and make them the members of a prostitute? Of course not!*”

I Cor 6:19-20: “*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? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.*”

(I Thess 4:3-8) “This is the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from immorality, that each of you know how to acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in

lustful passion as do the Gentiles who do not know God; not to take advantage of or exploit a brother in this matter, for the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you before and solemnly affirmed. For God did not call us to impurity but to holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not a human being but God, who (also) gives his Holy Spirit to you. ”

Bible also gives various precautions lest we may endanger the purity of our heart and body:

Sirach 9: 5:“*Entertain no thoughts against a virgin, lest you be enmeshed in damages for her*”

Sirach 9: 7:“*Gaze not about the lanes of the city and wander not through its squares*”

Sirach 9: 8:“*Avert your eyes from a comely woman; gaze not upon the beauty of another's wife-- Through woman's beauty many perish, for lust for it burns like fire*”

“*With a married woman dine not, recline not at table to drink by her side*” (Sirach 9: 9a).

Many things the church teaches on the basis of scripture and tradition regarding the use of sex may seem impractical and senseless to some people. It is because either they do not know the word of God or they do not believe in the power of God. “*Jesus said to them in reply, "You are misled because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God*” (Mt 22:29).

Fundamental Principles of the use of Sex

Human sexual activity is designed to promote love (unity) and life (procreation). And whenever that formula is altered or divided, sin enters the equation. Catechism of the Catholic Church underlines this fundamental principle: “The spouses’ union achieves the two fold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These two meanings of values of marriages cannot be separated without altering the couple’s spiritual life and compromising the good’s of marriage and the future of the marriage” CCC. 2363).

Only sex between a husband and wife is considered moral, and even then, the couple must be mutually respectful to each other. If the sole objective is personal pleasure and nothing more, then even a husband and wife sins by reducing his or her partner to a sex object or just a means to self-gratification. For example, using pornography or any kind of sex toy is strictly forbidden in the eyes of the church. The Church is very particular to exhort her children that marital union should be chaste. (See CCC2360, 2361, 2362 also).

So, to the church, human sexuality is not an end; but a means to an end-the greater unity between husband and wife and the possibility of new life. The Church teaches that “In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sigh and pledge of spiritual communion” (CCC 2360).

The scripture gives the following reason for keeping chastity: “*The body is not for immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is for the body, God raised the Lord and will also raise us by His power.*” I Cor 6: 13-14). Baptism makes it possible for a Christian body, female or male, to be united mysteriously with the body of Christ. Therefore, to sin

sexually with such a body is to make sacrilegious use of Christ's body. This is what Paul meant when he wrote: "*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then Christ's members and make them the members of a prostitute? Of course not!*" (I Cor 6:15)

SINS AGAINST SIXTH COMMANDMENT

The church teaches that all voluntary sexual activity or pleasure –in thought, action and word outside of marriage is objectionable and seriously wrong. The *Catechism* lists six specific sins against chastity, in order of increasing seriousness.

Lust

It is disordered desire for or inordinate enjoyment of sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes (CCC 2351).

Lust does not mean sexual pleasure as such, nor the delight in it, nor the desire for it in its right context. The Church really teaches that sexual pleasure is good, not evil. For God invented sex and its pleasure. "The Creator himself ... established that in the [generative] function, spouses should experience pleasure and enjoyment of body and spirit. They accept what the Creator has intended for them. At the same time, spouses should know how to keep themselves within the limits of just moderation" (CCC2362).

Lust divorces the two things God designed to be together; it seeks the pleasure apart from the purpose.

Thus it comes that even the marital act of couples within the legitimate marriage may become lust unless it is performed according to the fundamental principles of the use of sexuality mentioned above. Therefore, Our Lady of Fatima said: "Many marriages are not good; they do not please Our Lord and are not of God"

But, no spontaneous thoughts and feelings can be sins until they are willed or consented to by the will. Thoughts and feelings of sexual arousal are not lust; lust is *willing* the thoughts and feelings just for the pleasure without the purpose of the marriage union (personal self donation and procreation).

Masturbation

It 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." "The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose..."

Masturbation is wrong for the same reason lust is wrong, with the physical act now added to the mental act "For here sexual pleasure is sought outside of 'the sexual relationship... in which ... mutual self-giving and human procreation ... is achieved.'" (CCC 2352)

Fornication

It is the carnal union between an unmarried man and 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” (ccc2353).

It is wrong because God intends sexual sharing to express total love and commitment, which is open to the sharing of life. Fornication seeks pleasure without responsibility. It lacks the unconditional love that the sacrament of marriage represents. (CCC 2353).

In the culture where there is freedom of choosing the future life partner long before the actual marriage, there is the possibility for fornication unless the fiancés are spiritually and morally mature and strong. Because, sometimes the girlfriend and boy friend prefer ‘co-habitation’ for the sake of “*knowing*” each other more “*personally*”. We shall not forget that life of fornication before marriage will only endanger the future family life. Is it not one of the main reasons why some couples divorce, even after a long period of friendship and personal knowledge? The parents shall not close their eyes at this crime. Because, they are the custodians of their children’s holiness. Let them not forget what God told Ezekiel: “*Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, you shall warn them for me. If I say to the wicked man, You shall surely die; and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his wicked conduct so that he may live: that wicked man shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for this death*” (Ezek. 3: 17-18)

Pornography

Removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties. (CCC 2354). It is a grave offence. All those who watch such things, besides their own personal sins, are responsible for the whole world’s sin of impurity; because it is those who use pornography who foster the pornography business. And nothing else contributes to the world’s sins of impurity as pornography does.

Parents have a great obligation to make sure that their children do not use it.

Prostitution

It reduces the person to an instrument of sexual pleasure. The one who pays sins gravely against his own chastity. (CCC 2355) “*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take Christ's members and make them the members of a prostitute? Of course not! For "the two," it says, "will become one flesh." But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. 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? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body*” I Cor 6:15-20).

Rape

It is the forcible violation of the sexual privacy of another person, which causes grave damage that can mark the victim for life.

Incest.

It is the rape or sexual misuse of children committed by parents or other adult relatives. One of the results of sexualized culture is an increase in incest. It is an even grater offence.

Homosexual acts

It is sexual relations between men or between women who experience sexual attraction towards persons of the same sex. It violates natural law, cannot bring forth life, and “do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.” (CCC 2357) However, there is no basis for discrimination or judgment against persons with homosexual tendencies as they strive to live in chastity, to which all people are called. (CCC 2358, 2359).

It is also necessary to make a clear distinction between homosexual desires or a homosexual orientation, and homosexual acts. We are responsible for the acts we choose to perform, but not for the desires we experience (unless we freely will them or consent to them). Homosexual desires are disordered but they are not sins.

“Homosexual persons are called to chastity” CCC 2358) just as heterosexual persons are. They need the virtue of self-control to conquer powerfully attractive desires for illicit pleasures just as heterosexual persons do. And they can be serious and saintly Christians just as heterosexual persons can.

But those who choose “gay” life, and even fight for the rights of “gay couples” and all those who support it challenge God and His creation.

Causes of Impurity

Looks: The eyes are the windows of the soul, and immodest looks at scantily clothed people or upon oneself, immodest pictures, immodest dances, immodest movies, reading impure books, immodest T.V. shows and websites are all forbidden by the Sixth commandment. This is because it can arouse sexual desires which may lead to sinful acts. In Jesus’ words: “*Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart*” (Mt 5:28).

Words: *An immodest tongue is the devil’s carriage because it carries souls to Hell for him. St. Paul teaches: “But now is the time to cast off and throw away all these rotten garments of anger, hatred, cursing and dirty talk” Col 3:8)*

Actions:

a)Immodesty of Dress.

We shall not mix immodest dressing with culture. There is nothing to do with culture here. God’s laws are universal. The Scripture is written for all, even for non-Christians. What does Scripture say about dressing? : “ A woman shall not wear an article proper to man, nor shall a man put on a woman’s dress; for any one who does such things is an abomination to the Lord, your God” Deut.22:5); “ Women should adorn themselves with proper conduct, with modesty, and self control, not with braided hair styles and gold ornaments, or pearls, or expensive clothes” (I Tim 2: 9).re is no exception for some

nations or communities.

b) Passionate kisses are also sinful; prolonged embraces may become sinful.

God's plan for Sex and Marriage

- Marital Fidelity
- Unitive and Procreative Goals of Marriage
- Cultivate Chastity

The primary emphasis of 6th commandment is not adultery so much as fidelity to the promise husbands and wives make to each other. That fidelity reflects what the Bible calls covenant. In the Hebrew covenant, marriage was meant to be an earthly mirror of the “wedding” between God and Israel.

Fidelity to the marital promise removes the imagined boundaries of love. The better they are at fidelity, the more they think themselves as very lucky.

Couples whose experience reveals the creative results of fidelity will be far more able to treat their children with an organic love rather than as a functional duty.

Bishop Sheen says: “Fidelity in marriage means much more than abstaining from adultery. All religious ideals are positive, not negative”

What does the Church teach about sexual sharing within marriage?

Marital sexual sharing is an authentic sign of the total gift of the husband to the wife and the wife to the husband.

Within marriage, “sexuality is a source of joy and pleasure (ccc 2362) that encourages the couple to grow in faithful love and to persevere in the challenges and trials of married life”.

The married couple willingly accepts the responsibility of bringing forth new life. The gift of the child is a precious expression and fruit of God's creative love and the mutual giving of the spouses to each other.

“Fecundity is a gift, an *end of marriage*, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. So the Church, which is “on the side of life,” teaches that “it is necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered *per se* to the procreation of human life.” “This particular doctrine, expounded on numerous occasions by the Magisterium, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act” CCC 2366)

- However, the church is totally consistent in insisting that both the unitive and procreative meaning of marital union must be expressed and safeguarded whenever

married couples come together in the sexual act.

Humanae Vitae says: "each and every marriage act must be open to the transmission of life."

- The church praises those couples who courageously choose to have large families and see this as a blessing from the Lord. "Sacred Scripture and the Church's traditional practice see in *large families* a sign of God's blessing and the parents' generosity" CCC 2373)
- The church also teaches that responsible parenthood may be exercised by spouses who, for just reasons, wish to space the births of their children through periodic abstinence. (i.e., abstinence from sexual relations during fertile periods. CCC 2368, 2370).
- Methods of "Natural Family Planning" are morally acceptable. (CCC 2370)

Contraceptive sex

According to the Church's teaching, contraceptive sex is immoral because it divides the bond of love and life, unity and procreation.- isolating the dimension of human sexuality that unites two people from the possible procreative level.

Pope Paul VI taught in 'Humane Vitae', "Every act that intends to impede procreation must be repudiated, whether that act is intended as an end to be attained or as a means to be used, and whether it is done in anticipation of marital intercourse, or during it, or while it is having its natural consequence".

Pope John Paul II: "The Church is certainly aware of the many complex problems which couples in many countries face today in their task of transmitting life in a responsible way. She also recognizes the serious problem of population growth in the form it has taken in many parts of the world and its moral implications. However, she holds that consideration in depth of all aspects of these problems offers a new and stronger confirmation of the importance of the authentic teaching of the Church re-proposed in the Second Vatican Council and in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*."

Excluded from Christian behavior then, will be all acts that are performed with the purpose of directly preventing conception. Similarly excluded will be all forms of direct sterilization for this purpose.

At the same time the Church gives the couples the right to space the births: "For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness

but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood. Moreover, they should conform their behavior to the objective criteria of morality" (CCC 2368).

Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality. (CCC 2370).

Sins against Procreation

Any form of human reproduction that results from anything other than sexual intercourse, such as: Surrogate mothers, Sperm Banks are not morally acceptable. In vitro

fertilization, human cloning and all methods of artificial conception are equally sinful because they isolate and separate the God-intended bond of the unity and procreation.

Sex outside of marriage and conception outside of sex are considered violations of the unity within human sexuality.

The NINTH COMMANDMENT

The relevance of the Ninth Commandment lies in the fact that God wants us to pure to the core. External purity is not enough. Since man is an inseparable union of mind, body and soul, he should be holy in his wholeness. It is to highlight this fact that Jesus said in the sermon on the Mount: “*You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery*” Mt.5:27-28). Jesus has been preaching not a New Testament, a new Law, but the same Old Testament, the Hebrew law, but properly.

“The ninth Commandment warns against lust or carnal concupiscence” CCC2529).

“The struggle against carnal lust involves purifying the heart and practicing temperance” (CCC2530).

“Purity of heart will enable us to see God: it enables us even now to see things according to God” CCC 2531).

“Purity of the heart demands prayer, the practice of chastity, purity of intention and of vision”. (CCC 2532)

Purity of Heart

“*Happy are the pure of heart for they shall see God.*” Mt 5:8) Jesus taught that all the sins originate in a misdirected heart. “*For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy*” Mt 15:19)

In his Psalm of repentance, David does not talk about adultery or murder. He does not list his woeful behaviors. He talks about his heart, because he knows that is where the real trouble lies. He knows perfectly well that adultery and murder are terrible acts, but he realizes that it is far more important to get at the heart of the matter:

“*A clean heart create for me, God; renew me in a steadfast spirit. Do not drive me from you presence. Restore my joy in your salvation*” Ps 51:12-13a, 14a)

Behavior modification will not solve David’s problem. He digs deeper and asks for a conversion of heart. So he pleads for the creation of a clean heart. His new heart will bring him three things:

- 1) A steadfast spirit
- 2) A constant union of love with God
- 3) Joy of salvation.

God solved for David the problem of his disordered passions by creating a new heart for him.

Catechism says: purity requires modesty, an integral part of temperance. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden.... Modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing..." (CCC 2251-52).

Impure Thoughts

The Ninth commandment forbids all willful consents to impure thoughts and desires. And all willful pleasure in the irregular sexual promptings or motions of the flesh. That is, it forbids interior sins of thought and desire against the Sixth commandment.

Many people find themselves tempted by bad thoughts, but temptation is not a sin. The sin occurs when the thoughts are deliberately encouraged. You may feel that the thought was in your mind for a long time, that you were taking pleasure in it, that you welcomed it and wanted it to go on. No one commits sin against purity in thought until he wants to enjoy bad thoughts. Bad thought must almost be expected – until a person has taken himself firmly in hand and gained considerable virtue in this area.

Is every fully deliberate sin of purity, mortal?

Yes, most definitely. Here are the principles which help us to understand this:

1. to seek of set purpose and of full deliberation to arouse or excite or produce within ourselves sexual pleasure, whether complete or incomplete, outside the lawful views of marriage is always a mortal sin. Or, should the pleasure come to us unsought in time of temptation, and then for us to seek to continue to prolong or gratify it is, again, a mortal sin. In this sense, and only in this sense is it true to say that every willful sin of impurity is mortal. It does not matter *what* you do, but if you do it for the above purpose, then it is a mortal sin. We say, "Complete or Incomplete" because this pleasure within us is so powerful, vehement and impetuous in its operation – owing to our strong instinct and to our fallen nature – that we cannot promise to be able to check any fully deliberate act to produce or prolong even the *incomplete* pleasure; Hence, it is grave (mortal) sin, because we are putting ourselves in the proximate danger of sin when we say, foolishly, "I intend to go this far and no farther".

2. The guilty person must have his direct and immediate purpose to produce or prolong sexual pleasure

There must be full deliberation (i.e., advertence of the mind and consent of the will).

3. To do something deliberately, of set purpose, to produce or prolong sexual pleasure, even for some reason other than for pleasure, yet something which the person foresees or knows from experience will or may produce it... such an action, when fully deliberate is always a mortal sin.

There is mortal sin when what a person does is something which of its own very nature is apt to excite sexual pleasure, and at the same time the person has no serious reason for so

acting. And the same is true if, even granted he has such a reason, there is a real danger of his **accepting** (not merely **feeling**) the pleasure. For example, to look *closely* and for a time at one's own or another's nakedness, to let one's thoughts **dwell** on impure matters. To handle (not as a passing act) oneself or another indecently, **to look fixedly** at obscene pictures or to read obscene literature would be mortal sins.