

Catholic Moral Principles Concerning the Reading of Literature

By Fr. Stephen DeLallo
Revised: Sept. 15, 2016

Table of Contents	Page Number
I. Introduction.....	1
1. Catholic Moral Principles.....	1
2. Principles concerning the Danger of Sin and Near Occasions of Sin	1
A. Concerning the Danger of Sin.....	1
B. Concerning Occasions of Sin	1
* St. Alphonsus Liguori on Occasions of Sin.....	1
C. Note Concerning Scandal and Obscenity	2
1) Meaning of Obscenity	2
2) When is Something Obscene?.....	2
D. Note Concerning Old Testament Stories.....	3
E. The Warning of Our Lord Jesus Christ.....	3
1) Fr. Bruno Vercauteren, S.J. on Scandal	3
3. Adherence to the Catholic Moral Principles.....	3
A. St. Pius X Against the Modernists	4
B. The Destruction of the I.H.M. Nuns.....	4
4. Historical Review of Modernist / Liberal Subversion in Education	5
* Note on Sensitivity Training	6
II. The Role of Literature in Catholic Education	6
1. In General	6
* Archbishop Lefebvre and St. Mary's College.....	7
2. St. Basil the Great.....	7
3. Pope Pius XI: "Christian Education of Youth"	7
III. Exposing the Errors of Naturalists, Modernists and Liberals	7
1. Modernists and Liberals.....	7
* Antonio Gramsci and "Cultural Marxism"	8
2. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre	9
3. Cardinal Henry Manning of England, 1861	10
4. Cardinal Bernard Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, 1953	10
5. According to Catholic Principles of Moral Theology	11
6. Traditional Catholic Moral Theology Manuals.....	11
7. Note on the French Troubadours	11
A. Troubadours and Adulterous "Courtly Love"	11
B. Troubadours and Neo-Manichaeism	12
8. The Holy Office Speaks Against Sensual-Mystic Literature	12
IV. Pope Pius XI: Christian Education of Youth, Dec. 31, 1929.....	13
V. Additional Citations from the Church and Saints	14
1. The Council of Trent	14
2. Pope Leo XIII.....	14
3. Pope Pius XII	15
4. St. Clement of Alexandria	15
5. St. Bernard of Clairvaux.....	15
6. St. Thomas Aquinas	15
7. St. Philip Neri	15
8. St. Alphonsus Liguori.....	15

I. Introduction:

1. The Catholic Moral Principles outlined below can help Catholics – especially parents and teachers – to discern what kind of literature the youth are allowed to read as good Christians. It is necessary to be guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church and great saints rather than to rely on one's own ideas and opinions. The Church is a 2000-year-old Mother with great prudence and wisdom.

Since college and university students are normally more mature and responsible than high school students, they are able to read literary works with more mature themes, provided there is no near occasion of sin. Of course, they also must follow the Catholic principles of morality with regard to literature – thus avoiding any literature with passages that describe or promote impurity and moral depravity, especially if they include vulgar and filthy words or conversations.

2. Principles Concerning the Danger of Sin and the Near Occasions of Sin:

A. Concerning the Danger of Sin, we read in the “Manual of Moral Theology” by McHugh O.P. and Callan O.P., Vol. 1, p. 87: “Danger of sin is the likelihood that it will be committed in certain circumstances. It is of two kinds, *proximate* and *remote*. (1) Danger of sin is *proximate* where there is moral certainty that in given circumstances sin will be committed. (2) Danger of sin is *remote* when the likelihood that sin will be committed is not morally certain, and does not exclude a serious and well-founded probability or expectation to the contrary.”

B. Concerning Occasions of Sin: In McHugh and Callan, Vol. 1, pp. 88-89, we read four main points:

1) “Occasions of sin are external circumstances, i.e., persons, places or things, which tempt one to sin. Occasions of sin are of various kinds: (a) they are proximate (near) or remote, according as it is morally certain or only likely that they will lead to sin; (b) they are necessary or free, according as one is able or not able to abandon them without difficulty.”

In his “Handbook of Moral Theology” (p. 327, #710), Fr. Dominic Prummer, O.P. says: “A *remote* occasion of sin is one which offers a slight danger or sin in which a person rarely commits sin. A *proximate* occasion is a grave external danger or sinning, either for all men or only for certain types. The gravity of the danger depends on: a) general experience (such as the reading of an extremely obscene book), b) the frequency of relapse into the same sin (e.g., an inn for a habitual drunkard), c) the character of the penitent (e.g., a girl for an unchaste youth) ... A *proximate* occasion is either *free* or *necessary*. It is *free* if it can be avoided easily (e.g., an inn); it is *necessary* if it cannot be avoided (e.g., a minor's parental home).”

In the *Baltimore Catechism* No. 3, question 76, we read: “The near occasions of sin are all persons, places or things that may easily lead us into sin. There is a grave obligation to avoid the near occasion of mortal sin. If circumstances force us into the near occasion of sin, we are obliged to make use of the necessary safeguards, such as prayer and the frequent reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.”

In practice, it is a *near occasion of sin* when a person has a well-grounded fear according to experience that he will most likely fall into sin in this situation. It is a *remote occasion of sin* when a person has a sincere conviction that he is strong enough to resist the temptation. In his manual of “Moral Theology,” Fr. Heribert Jone, O.F.M. says that it is normally permitted to place oneself in a *remote* occasion of sin for a reasonable cause (p. 428, # 607). However, he also points out that “there are various intermediary stages between the remote and proximate occasion. The greater the danger of sinning, the more serious must be the reason to justify one in not avoiding the occasion of sin” (p. 429, # 608).

* **St. Alphonsus Liguori** says in a sermon for the 1st Sunday after Easter: “Being compelled by exorcisms to tell the sermons which displeased him the most, *the Devil confessed that it was the sermon on avoiding the occasions of sin.*”

2) “It is not lawful to remain in a free occasion of sin, for to do so is to expose oneself rashly to the

danger of sin.”

3) “It is not lawful for one who is in a necessary occasion of sin to neglect means that are adapted to preserve him from the moral contagion by which he is surrounded; for to neglect spiritual safeguards and protections in such a case is to refuse to resist temptation. The means that should be used depend on circumstances, but prayer and firm resolve to avoid sin should be employed in every case.”

4) “The gravity of the sin committed by one who freely remains in an occasion of sin, or who does not use the requisite spiritual helps in a necessary occasion depends on various factors: (a) if the sin to which he is tempted is light (venial), he does not sin gravely; (b) if the sin to which he is tempted is serious (mortal) and the occasion is proximate, he sins gravely; (c) if the occasion is remote, he sins venially.”

***Note: Concerning Absolution of Penitents in the Occasion of Sin:**

In his “Handbook of Moral Theology”, p. 328, #711, Prummer says: “*First Rule:* a) A penitent in a remote occasion of sin may be absolved; b) penitents in necessary proximate occasions of sin may also be absolved if they are truly contrite and seriously resolve to use all the means necessary for avoiding sin...

“*Second Rule:* Absolution must be denied to any penitent refusing to relinquish a free proximate occasion of sin. Such a penitent is considered to lack a sincere desire of avoiding sin.”

C. Concerning Scandal and Obscenity: The following summary of Catholic moral principles concerning *scandal and obscenity* can also be used to clarify what is meant by *near (proximate) occasions of sin*, especially with regard to purity and chastity. This information is also taken from the same *Manual of Moral Theology* by McHugh O.P. and Callan O.P., Vol. 1, pp. 587-590:

1) Meaning of Obscenity: “**No. 1455:** Obscenity is a quality of words, acts or objects by which impure thoughts are conveyed, or impure desires or actions suggested. We may consider it either internally (i.e., in the intention of the person who uses the words, acts or objects) or externally (i.e., in the nature of the things themselves which are used) ...

“No. 1455b: *External obscenity* is the tendency of words, acts or objects themselves to call up impure images in the mind, or to excite impure desires or actions in those to whom they are presented. The use of such words, acts, etc., is therefore a mortal sin. For, if the thing said or done is wrong in itself (such as obscene language), it is a scandalous sin against purity; if it is wrong on account of those who will be influenced (such as a talk on sex matters to immature or weak persons), it is a sin of scandal. Hence, a good or even religious motive (such as instruction, refutation of error, health, or mysticism) does not excuse the employment of what is clearly obscene, for the end does not justify the means.

2) When is Something Obscene? “**No. 1456:** It is not always easy to determine in particular cases when a thing is obscene from its very nature, but the following general principles can be given:

“1456a” Pictures, statues and other images are obscene, when they represent scenes of immoral or sexual acts, or lascivious attitudes or posture...

“1456b: Female dress or adornment is lascivious, when there is a notable display of the person through abbreviated skirts, necks, and sleeves; or a suggestiveness expressed in transparency of material or a closeness of fit that brings out the lines and curves of the figure; or in an extremity of fashion whose striking color or design will make the wearer conspicuous and direct special attention to her physical charms.”

“1456c: Plays on the stage or moving picture screen are obscene by reason of the lesson taught (as when purity is derided or impurity condoned), by reason of the thing represented (as when the main theme is impurity, or when acts of impurity are represented or suggested, or when sexual passion is emphasized), or by reason of the players (as when they are noted for immorality, or when their dress is indecent, or their language objectionable) ...

“1456d: Dances are obscene in themselves when the postures, movements, or contact of the dancers is indecent; they are obscene by reason of the dancers, when these are indecently attired. Public dance halls, cabarets, road houses, and night clubs – where there is no supervision and young girls come unattended to dance until late hours with men unknown to them, and where there is intoxication and boisterousness – are the natural haunts of the obscene dance, but it may be found even in more respectable places.

“1456e: Books or other writings contain obscenity when they inculcate or recommend impure acts, or advise how these may be committed; when they treat sins of impurity or narrate immoral facts or stories in such a manner as to make vice seem alluring or pardonable to the intended reader; when an erotic composition by language, allusions, details, sympathetic treatment, etc., gives prominence to animal passion.”

* **St. Paul says in Ephesians Ch. 5:3-6:** “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints: or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose; but rather giving of thanks. For know this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person (which is a serving of idols), hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief.”

D. Note Concerning Old Testament Stories: The principles outlined above also show why Old Testament stories in the Bible that narrate immorality, e.g., King David and Bathsheba, the evil priests and Susanna, the sin of Onan, etc., are not in the category of indecent literature. For such biblical stories are simply narrating sinful behavior, and are not written in a manner to make the sinful behavior tempting, alluring, acceptable or excusable. Rather, in these biblical stories, the reader is shown that the evil actions of immoral people will be punished by God, both in this world and the next.

On the other hand, in indecent and filthy literature, sinful and impure behavior is portrayed to the reader, and acted out by the players in the story, as something desirable, alluring and enjoyable – and sometimes acceptable and excusable. Consequently, it is a serious error, and a grave offense against the infinite holiness of God, the Author of Sacred Scripture, to attempt to justify the reading of indecent and impure literature stories by saying they are similar to biblical stories of the Old Testament that narrate sinful behavior and God’s punishment.

In addition, since it is God Who has willed that some stories be in Sacred Scripture that narrate immoral behavior, then by that very fact, God Himself will always grant sufficient grace to the qualified reader so that such stories will not be a near occasion of sin. For God is infinitely holy and never leads a person into sin or temptation: “Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God. For God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempteth no man” (James 1:13).

E. The Warning of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Mark 9: 42: “*And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were cast into the sea.*” Therefore, all teachers, whether religious or laity, who place literature with indecent texts into the hands of the youth are guilty of scandalizing children.

*Not infrequently people hear Sunday sermons about the dangers of the internet, smartphones and tablets because of the occasions of sins of impurity. But it’s precisely those teachers who promote the use of literature with indecent texts in the classroom who are at least partially responsible for sparking the curiosity about sins of impurity in the minds of the youth, which in turn may lead them to the bad use of smartphones, tablets and computers.

1) Fr. Bruno Vercausse, S.J., in his well-known book, “Practical Meditations” for Religious (Jan. 15, 1954), Vol. 2, pp. 215-16, says: “The fathers (of the Church) speak in terms equally severe of those who give scandal. They call them emissaries and missionaries of the devil; devils incarnate, because they lead others into sin as much or even more than the devil does himself; assassins of the soul, a thousandfold more guilty than murderers of the body; antichrists, undoing the work of Christ; a living plague spreading everywhere infection and death...”

Fr. Vercausse continues: “You may not have a direct intention of leading others into sin, but if (as St. Thomas says) either by word, act or omission you become an occasion of sin to another, you are guilty of scandal. A superior, for instance, commits it if through negligence or weakness he fails to correct abuses which have crept in, for he is the cause of the laxity and disorders which follow.”

3. Adherence to Catholic Moral Principles concerning literature is especially important today when we consider the methods used in schools over the past fifty years to corrupt Christian morals. For decades before Vatican II, Modernists, Communists and Freemasons infiltrated Catholic schools and seminaries, frequently in the role of psychotherapists and psychologists, in their long term goal to destroy the Catholic Church.

A. St. Pius X Against the Modernists: St. Pius X was already battling Modernists who were infiltrating seminaries during his pontificate in the early 1900s, when he wrote his famous encyclical *Pascendi* against Modernism on Sept. 8, 1907. With the assistance of Cardinal Merry Del Val, he made continuous efforts to expose and remove the secret enemies of Christ who, disguised as priests and professors, were sowing the seeds of modernism in various colleges and seminaries. Because of this, the Modernists were angry with Pius X and accused him of being severe and uncharitable towards their friends – which was one of the arguments used against Pius X in the process of his canonization. (See “St. Pius X: Sodalitium Pianum,” *The Angelus*, Nov. 2003, pp. 5-10).

The enemies of Our Lord know that the most effective way to destroy the Church is to undermine the Catholic formation of seminarians, for in this way they will destroy the priesthood. Consequently, one of St. Pius X’s main concerns was to protect the seminaries, in order to insure the proper spiritual and doctrinal formation of candidates to the priesthood.

Archbishop Lefebvre, also recognizing the importance of safeguarding the Catholic priesthood, made the formation of priests the first and principal goal of the Society of St. Pius X. In his book, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, he exposes and refutes the errors of Freemasonry which have invaded the Church, especially since Vatican II. Thus, on page 11 he tells his readers: “*It is enough to tell you, dear readers, that even if I do not always name it, Freemasonry is at the center of the topics of which I am going to speak to you in all the following chapters.*”

B. The Destruction of the I.H.M. Nuns: In the late 1960s, we also saw the destruction of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Order (I.H.M.), which was one of the largest order of teaching nuns in the United States at that time. This work of destruction was accomplished by the use of *non-directive psychotherapy* under the direction of two renowned psychologists of the time, Dr. Carl Rogers and Dr. William Coulson.

In an interview by Dr. William Marra, called “The Story of a Repentant Psychologist” (which can be found on the EWTN website, and in a 1994 special issue of the *Latin Mass, Chronicle of Catholic Reform*), Dr. Coulson says: “Once I got to Wisconsin, I joined Rogers in his study of nondirective psychotherapy with normal people. We had the idea that if it was good for neurotics, it would be good for normals... So Rogers had the idea that to help these neurotics, we should refer them to the source of authority within them – in other words, refer them to their consciences...”

“We inundated that system (I.H.M. Order) with humanistic psychology. We called it Therapy for Normals, TFN. The IHMs had some 60 schools when we started; at the end, they had one. There were some 560 nuns when we began. Within a year after our first interventions, 300 of them were petitioning Rome to get out of their vows. They did not want to be under anyone’s authority, except the authority of their imperial inner selves...”

“Humanistic psychotherapy, the kind that has virtually taken over the Church in America, and dominates so many aberrant educations, like sex education, and drug education, holds that the most important source of authority is within you, that you must listen to yourself.”

Dr. Coulson and Dr. Rogers, along with 58 other “facilitators”, organized small encounter/sensitivity groups. The participants were encouraged to express their real, innermost feelings as they interacted with the others participants. Coulson says: “They were more open with one another, they were less deceitful, they didn’t hide their judgments from one another. If they didn’t like one another they were inclined to say so; and if they were attracted to one another, they were inclined to say that, too.”

By means of this sensitivity training, participants were told that they had the answers within themselves; they are their own authority, and that they were to appeal solely to their consciences: “What does this mean to you?”; “I cannot pass judgment on your feelings.” However, since one’s innermost feelings also include

suppressed inclinations of sensuality, the encounter groups also sparked immoral behavior – including homosexual behavior.

In his interview with Dr. Marra, Dr. Coulson admits: “But we didn't have a doctrine of evil. As I've said, Maslow saw that we failed to understand the reality of evil in human life. When we implied to people that they could trust their evil impulses, they also understood us to mean that they could trust their evil impulses, that they really weren't evil. But they were really evil... Maslow did warn us about this, Maslow believed in evil, and we didn't. He said our problem was our total confusion about evil. This is quoting from Maslow's journals, which came out too late to stop us. His journals came out in '79, and we had done our damage by then.”

According to Dr. Coulson, he and Dr. Rogers also used this sensitivity training on other Religious Orders: “We corrupted a whole raft of Religious Orders on the west coast in the '60s by getting the nuns and priests to talk about their distress... We did similar programs for the Jesuits, for the Franciscans, for the Sisters of Providence of Charity, and for the Mercy Sisters. We did dozens of Catholic religious organizations, because as you recall, in the excitement following Vatican II, everybody wanted to update, everybody wanted to renew; and we offered a way for people to renew, without having to bother to study. We said, we'll help you look within. After all, is not God in your heart? Is it not sufficient to be yourself, and wouldn't that make you a good Catholic? And if it doesn't, then perhaps you shouldn't have been a Catholic in the first place. Well, after a while, there weren't many Catholics left.”

4. Historical Review of Modernist / Liberal Subversion in Education:

Catholics should remember that before Vatican II, the whole Church was traditional Catholic. Therefore, it stands to reason that the enemies of Christ, who infiltrated the Church before Vatican II, have still been infiltrating the traditional Catholic Church since Vatican II, continuing their work to destroy the Church. And they will be using the same methods of subversion that they used before Vatican II and during the 1960s and 1970s, especially the clever tactic of confusing and brainwashing good people to help them in their work.

During the 1960s, countless parents saw the faith of their children undermined by liberal priests, brothers and nuns in Catholic schools. The method was always the same: teachers would mix truth with error (e.g., Adam and Eve were only a myth; Easter is the celebration of the blooming flowers and trees coming to life in springtime, etc.). And they would instruct the children not to tell their parents, saying that their parents were old fashioned and wouldn't understand.

In public and Catholic high schools, literature and poetry were introduced that contained texts describing immorality and sensuality, and sometimes with references to homosexuality. In the classroom, students were told not to say anything to their parents because they wouldn't understand. To defend their literature program, teachers explained that students should know about the grave moral evils in the world in order to be better prepared to confront them after high school. Besides, they argued, it's not good to shelter kids from the evils they are going to see anyway when they go into the world.

If parents objected or complained, teachers would make veiled remarks to belittle or ridicule their authority in front of the students in the classroom. They accused parents of being old fashioned, uneducated, extreme, moralists, scrupulous or prudish (puritanical). Sometimes they were accused of having some kind of sensual or psychological disorder which made them see temptations that “normal” people don't see – thus insulting their intelligence and moral integrity. Also, if a student complained to his parents, teachers would make remarks in the classroom to embarrass him or make him look dumb in front of the other students. This method of intimidation would cause the other students to be afraid to complain to their parents about anything in the class.

Due to the opposition of many parents, many teachers tried to limit or eliminate the influence of parents in the education of their children at school. But by doing this, they were actually promoting one of the Marxist goals in education: *Children should be raised and educated away from the negative and suppressive*

influence of their parents. (See the 1963 U.S. Congressional Record: “45 Communist Goals for America, #41”)

The teachers were often witty and fun, and tried to establish a good rapport with their students, encouraging them to use their own intelligence and freedom to think for themselves in deciding what was right and wrong, e.g., by asking them: “*How do ‘you’ feel about this?*” or “*What do ‘you’ think about this?*”

In Catholic Youth Organizations (CYO), teachers would present moral cases and dilemmas to small groups of Catholic teenagers, who were then asked to give the answer they thought was best according to their conscience, and according to the circumstances in the case, i.e., “the situation.” But the correct Catholic answer was not clearly explained at the end of the discussion. Rather, each student was encouraged to follow the answer that felt right to him.

By using these methods of *Sensitivity Training* and *Situation Ethics*, students were slowly conditioned to doubt or reject the traditional moral values taught by their parents, thus creating division and discord in the family. This method of conditioning students to modify or “reinterpret” their traditional moral values is called *Values Clarification*. All these methods of *Behavior Modification* were part of the Communist plan to corrupt and destroy the traditional Christian family in America.

*** Note on Sensitivity Training:** *Sensitivity Training* in schools is a communist technique designed to convince children that they are the main authority in their own lives. In practice, we can see three main steps: (1) direct students to get in touch with *their own feelings* about moral or doctrinal questions, e.g., “*How do ‘you’ feel about this?*” or “*What do ‘you’ think about this?*” (2) desensitize students to impurity by slowly familiarizing them with reading material (and movies) that contain indecencies and scenes of immorality, so that eventually they won’t seem so bad; and (3) direct teachers to establish a friendly rapport with the students so that they will develop a strong sense of loyalty to the teacher, thus defending him and his teaching methods.

This work of corruption was especially effective in Catholic schools because parents and students who objected were told to be quiet and obey, and trust their priests and religious superiors, because “they have the grace of state” to make the right judgments in these matters. Those who continued to show opposition were accused of being uneducated, uncharitable, Pharisees, and causing division in the parish. Of course, all Catholics know that the grace of God does not take away free will. This is why there is a crisis in the Church today! Bishops, priests and religious superiors have resisted and disobeyed the “grace of state” given to them by God, and by embracing modernist and liberal doctrines, they have betrayed Our Lord and His Church in matters of faith and morals.

II. The Role of Literature in Catholic Education

1. In General, the Catholic Church approves the reading and study of good literature because:

(1) it introduces students to the transcendent realities of truth, beauty and goodness, with the ultimate goal of raising their minds and hearts to God and to the truths of the Catholic Faith. In this way, natural truth and goodness are always considered in their relation to supernatural realities;

(2) it presents truth and knowledge in an organized and structured manner, thereby training students to think in a logical, rational way. This improves their ability to think abstractly about important concepts, such as truth and justice, love and compassion, honor and loyalty, bravery and fortitude, etc., and their opposing vices;

(3) it trains students in “critical thinking,” i.e., disciplined thinking that is clear and rational, based on synthesizing and analyzing evidence to formulate correct judgments;

(4) it helps students in the formation of good moral judgement, by allowing them to experience various life situations through characters in a story, to witness praise for virtue and punishment for vice, and to think what they should do *as Catholics* if they were in similar situations;

(5) in the practical order, good literature improves the students’ vocabulary, reading comprehension, reading ability and language growth, thus improving their ability to express themselves more clearly and

intelligently in writing and conversation.

However, with regard to literature stories that praise virtue and condemn vice, the Church has always warned against reading any literature that would be a near occasion of sin. Consequently, it is not allowed to read literature that contains texts which illustrate or describe scenes of sensuality or moral depravity, or which relate various details of sins of impurity – especially if they contain vulgar and filthy words and conversations. According to the Church and all the saints, it would be a serious sin to place oneself in the near (or proximate) occasion of sins of impurity.

***Archbishop Lefebvre and St. Mary's College:** When speaking about the Liberal Arts education at St. Mary's College in St. Marys, Kansas, Archbishop Lefebvre once said (in 1984): "Dear friends, I have learned that for the first time, St. Mary's will present her students for graduation. It is truly an event with merit to be noted in the annals of the College. This is the fruit of the conjunction of the patient and devoted work of many people. I am thinking not only of the professional body, but also of all the families... This conjunction could not have taken place without the ideal which is pursued at the College of St. Marys: ideal of the Christian and Catholic formation and education under the regard of God, of the Cross of Jesus, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patron of the College... This event, which you are celebrating, must be the occasion to thank God, and to beseech Him to continue to aid the College, in order that it might form children worthy of the Catholic Church and courageous citizens of your country." (See: St. Mary's College yearbook, *"The Sword,"* 1983-84).

2. St. Basil the Great, in his "Address to Young Men" on Reading Greek Literature: "Since it is through virtue that we must enter upon this life of ours, and since much has been uttered in praise of virtue by the poets, much by historians, and much more still by philosophers, we especially ought to apply ourselves to such literature. *For it is no small advantage that a certain intimacy and familiarity with virtue should be engendered in the minds of the young*, seeing that the lessons learned by such are likely, in the nature of the case, to be indelible, having been deeply impressed on them by reason of the tenderness of their souls" (#4).

And again, St. Basil says: "*But we shall take rather those passages of theirs in which they have praised virtue or condemned vice*. For just as in the case of other beings, enjoyment of flowers is limited to their fragrance and color; but the bees, as we see, possess the power to get honey from them as well, so it is possible here also for those who are pursuing, not merely what is sweet and pleasant in such writings, to store away from them some benefit also for their souls;

"Inasmuch as the subjects they deal with are of every kind, you ought not to give your attention to all they write without exception; but whenever they recount for you the deeds or words of good men, you ought to cherish and emulate these and try to be as far as possible like them; but when they treat of wicked men, you ought to avoid such imitation, stopping your ears no less than Odysseus did, according to what those same poets say, when he avoided the songs of the Sirens. *For familiarity with evil words is, as it were, a road leading to evil deeds.*" (#4).

3. Pope Pius XI, in "Christian Education of Youth," Dec. 31, 1929: "In such a school, in harmony with the Church and the Christian family, the various branches of secular learning will not enter into conflict with religious instruction to the manifest detriment of education. And if, when occasion arises, it be deemed necessary to have the students read authors propounding false doctrine for the purpose of refuting it, this will be done after due preparation and with such an antidote of sound doctrine, that it will not only do no harm, but will be an aid to the Christian formation of youth." (#86)

"In such a school moreover, the study of the vernacular and of classical literature will do no damage to moral virtue. There the Christian teacher will imitate the bee, which takes the choicest part of the flower and leaves the rest, as St. Basil teaches in his discourse to youths on the study of the classics. Nor will this necessary caution, suggested also by the pagan Quintilian, in any way hinder the Christian teacher from gathering and turning to profit, whatever there is of real worth in the systems and methods of our modern times, mindful of the Apostle's advice: "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good" (#87).

III. Exposing The Errors of Naturalists, Modernists and Liberals

1. Modernists and Liberals say that the youth should read and study classic literature which illustrates and describes scenes of indecency and moral depravity, so they can see for themselves the evil consequences of original sin, and thereby be better prepared to resist these sins and practice virtue in the modern world. Besides, they say, it's wrong to shelter young people from the world they have to live in.

A. First of all, this opinion is directly opposed to the teaching of Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on *Christian Education of Youth*, when he says: "Another very grave danger is that *naturalism* which nowadays invades the field of education in that most delicate matter of *purity of morals*. Far too common is the error of those who, with dangerous assurance and under an ugly term propagate a so-called sex-education, *falsely imagining they can forearm youths against the dangers of sensuality by means purely natural, such as a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction* for all indiscriminately, even in public; and, worse still, *by exposing them at an early age to the occasions, in order to accustom them, so it is argued, and as it were to harden them against such dangers.*" (#65)

"Such persons grievously err in refusing to recognize the inborn weakness of human nature, and the law of which the Apostle speaks, fighting against the law of the mind; and also in ignoring the experience of facts, from which it is clear that, *particularly in young people, evil practices are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as of weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions, and unsupported by the means of grace*" (#66).

Liberal teachers often insist that these texts of Pius XI do not apply to them, claiming that they are only teaching "classic literature" in the classroom, not sex education. However, teaching literature with sexual themes, describing scenes of sensuality, indecency and moral depravity, is a form of sex education in the classroom. This is why Pope Pius XI's texts concerning sex education in "*Christian Education of Youth*" do apply to the teaching of this kind of literature to the youth.

Marxists in Russia also advocate sex education *through literature*. The Russian *Commissioner for Children's Rights*, Pavel Astakhov, who reports directly to President Vladimir Putin, stated in his Sept. 2013 interview with *Rossiia 24 TV News*: "I am against any kind of sex education among children. It is unacceptable to allow things that could corrupt children. *The best sex education there is, in fact, is Russian literature and literature in general.* Children should read more. Everything is there, all about love and about relationships between sexes."

* **Antonio Gramsci and "Cultural Marxism"**: Two renowned Marxist theorists, Antonio Gramsci of Italy (1891-1937) and Georg Lukacs of Hungary (1885-1971), taught that the main obstacle standing in the way of a Communist new world order was the Christian foundation and culture of the Western World. Consequently, they taught that, rather than trying to use military and violent means, Marxists must work to influence, de-Christianize and transform western culture, beginning with the family and then progressing through churches and schools, especially by means of literature, art, science, music, movies and entertainment. This Marxist method is often referred to as "Cultural Marxism" of the Frankfurt School.

B. Secondly, this opinion logically falls into two errors. The *first error* says that it is sometimes permitted to do evil in order to accomplish good, which was condemned by St. Paul, in Romans 3:8. The *second error* is *Naturalism*, which, by denying or ignoring the wounds and consequences of original sin, promotes the reading of famous literature and poetry for the sake of its eloquence and style, in spite of descriptions of indecencies and moral depravity in the text. By definition, *Naturalism* excessively praises and exalts the natural goodness and dignity of man, and man's great works of literature, poetry and art, above the Law of God and Christian moral guidelines. The movement of *Naturalism* was the first stage of attack against Christendom during the *Renaissance* of the late Middle Ages.

C. Thirdly, this method to corrupt the youth is similar to the *method of Lucifer* when tempting Adam and Eve. For in offering them the forbidden fruit, Lucifer said: "*Your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil*" (Gen. 3:5). Thus, he offered them the knowledge of both good and

evil, under the pretext that they would be more knowledgeable, more intelligent, superior, and better prepared to live in the world. This appealed to their intellectual pride, and caused a disordered curiosity for the knowledge of evil.

D. Fourthly, the use of literature which places an emphasis on the evil and wickedness of man's fallen nature tends to promote a spirit of pessimism and despair. Writers who do this may sometimes be overwhelmed by the grave moral evils in today's world, and seem to have lost hope in the power of God's grace to convert and change sinners in a supernatural way. Instead, they are under the delusion that by focusing on and broadcasting the crimes, perversions, and horrors of modern man, they can shock and enlighten people to make them abandon their evil lives and to convert to Christ.

However, in reality, this is not the case. For, even though it is necessary to expose and condemn *with prudence* the evils in society which pose a grave danger to the salvation of souls, true disciples of Christ do not focus on them, for a disordered *fixation on evil* neither spiritually nor psychologically disposes souls to seek interior peace in the truths of the Catholic Faith. Rather, it will more likely cause them to react in a negative manner, by causing frustration, depression or despair, and sometimes anger and violence, about the social evils they cannot prevent—all of which is directly opposed to the spiritual life and the practice of virtue.

This negative spirit in literature also seems to be influenced by Protestantism, which actually revived the pessimism and despair found in the ancient doctrines of Manichaeism and Gnosticism (e.g., the medieval Cathars and Albigensians). For, according to Martin Luther, man's fallen nature has been completely corrupted by Original Sin (not gravely *wounded*, as in Catholic doctrine), and it remains completely corrupt even after the grace of Baptism. Even with the redemptive grace of Christ Our Redeemer, man is still unable to avoid sin and attain true *interior* sanctity; grace simply covers up his sinfulness. In a similar way, Gnosticism and Manichaeism teach that man's corporeal nature, and matter itself, is intrinsically evil, and everything in the corporeal world is evil. (See *Characters of the Inquisition*, by William Thomas Walsh, pp. 221-22).

In 1954, the bishops of Germany issued a joint pastoral letter taking up the problems of contemporary Catholic literature. After noting that modern literature in general is "*chiefly attracted by the negative side of reality*," they said: "The reader must not be allowed to gain the impression that men are hopelessly and irredeemably victimized by the powers of darkness." (See: Fr. M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J., *Sex in Contemporary Literature: Modern Classics and Condemned Literature*, 1960).

2. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, in his book "*They Have Uncrowned Him*" (p. 4), says: "*Naturalism* is found beforehand in the *Renaissance*, which, in its effort to recover the riches of the ancient pagan cultures, and of the Greek culture and art in particular, came to glorify man, nature and natural forces to an exaggerated degree. In exalting the goodness and the power of nature, one devalued and made disappear from the minds of man the necessity of grace; the fact that humanity is destined for the supernatural order and the light brought in by revelation.

"Under a pretext of art, they determined to introduce then everywhere, even in the churches, that nudism – we can speak without exaggeration – which triumphs in the Sistine Chapel. Without doubt, looked at from the point of view of art, those works have their value; *but they have, alas, above all a carnal aspect of exaltation of the flesh that is really opposed to the teaching of the Gospel*: 'For the flesh covets the spirit,' says St. Paul, 'and the spirit militates against the flesh'."

To defend the use of this kind of literature program mixed with indecency and immorality, Modernists and Liberals argue that it is important to address the corruption of man in the *natural order* first, in order to restore order and balance to man's *natural life* as the necessary preparation for grace and the supernatural work of God in his soul.

This opinion, however, is false and contrary to Catholic teaching. Archbishop Lefebvre always condemned "*the false principle that states 'Let us restore the natural order so that it might become supernatural'*", saying that this false principle is 'disastrous for the true apostolate.... Christ our Lord never taught

us such a principle since He Himself was the restoration of order in the natural and supernatural domains. His grace both heals us and raises us up’.” (See “*Marcel Lefebvre*,” by Bishop Tissier de Mallerais, p. 280).

The same Archbishop also reprimands the liberal opinion which holds that young people should be taught about vice in order to be more protected against it as they get older. Concerning this error, and in view of protecting the dignity of marriage in the minds of the young, the Archbishop says: “So many errors are common on this subject, even in Christian circles! *New methods are advocated on the grounds that it is desirable for a child to know about vice in order to be the more securely protected against it*; but do you inoculate young bodies with adult vaccines? Such methods seriously, and often irreparably, scandalize impressionable young souls.” (See “*Pastoral Letters*,” p. 20).

Additionally, in his book, *An Open Letter to Confused Catholics* (p. 110), the Archbishop warns the faithful to beware of modernists who “advise children to listen to what atheists have to say, because they have much to learn from them; and besides, if they do not believe in God they have their reasons, and these are worth knowing!”

In his book, “*They Have Uncrowned Him*,” the Archbishop points out that modernists are infected by this same error in their method of trying to convert non-believers to the Faith. He says: “Therefore, according to them, in order to convert those who do not believe in the supernatural, an abstraction must be made of the revelation of Our Lord, of grace, of miracles—if you are dealing with atheists, do not speak to them of God, but put yourself onto their level, at their pitch; go into their system! By this means, you are going to become a Marxist-Christian: it will be they who will convert you!” (pp. 112-113).

In the work of restoring Christian society, the Archbishop says in his book “*A Bishop Speaks*” (pp. 70-71): “A Christian civilization has existed; we no longer have to invent one. It has existed: we have only to bring it back to life. We must not hesitate to rebuild society on Our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other foundation for our morals, our personal life, our family life, and our public life.” And then the Archbishop warned: “We must build in a spirit of faith upheld by prayer. We must not be content with half-measures and ourselves take refuge in compromise. If we do not build on the rock of Catholicity, with our Lord Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, *we shall begin to shuffle and find ourselves, with Liberalism and Neo-Modernism, at the gates of Communism.*”

3. Cardinal Henry Manning of England writes in 1861: “In the 15th century, the study and cultivation of classical literature excited in the minds of the leading men of European countries a sort of admiration, which I may call a worship, of the models of pagan antiquity, of its philosophy and its policy, of its patriots and of its public morality. That which is styled the *Renaissance* or the New Birth of the Christian world, profoundly infected the men of that day. This *antichristian reaction* has spread down to the present time. People were deceived into thinking that the Renaissance was the measure of all that is cultivated and civilized. *This was the first step to the rejection of Christian civilization.*”

“It introduced paganism into books, into language, into art, into education. On the testimony of multitudes of men, the education of Christian nations has been based and formed upon what is called *classical literature*. The examples, maxims, principles, the deeds, the crimes – personal, private and public – glorified in classical literature, have been taken in unconsciously by boys in their early education for these three hundred years. In Italy and France, this is already bearing its fruit.” (See “*Fourfold Sovereignty of God*,” pp. 88-89).

4. Cardinal Bernard Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, says in *The Pastoral Letter for Advent, 1953*: “In recent years We have been much concerned at certain trends in contemporary literature. Many novels are published today, which show a total disregard of elementary standards of decency. Even if their content be not pornographic within the meaning of the law, they are at best a danger to the morals of their readers and represent an abuse of that freedom of expression which is bestowed by the absence of censorship by the civil authority. *It is often alleged in justification that their authors are endeavoring to be realist and to reflect an existent state of affairs. There can be no justification for publishing material which, if not directly*

immoral, is calculated to prove an occasion of sin to the vast majority of readers. Sins against the sixth commandment may be in thought and in word as well as in deed.

“It is sadly true that a number of Catholic writers appear to have fallen into this error. Indeed, novels which purport to be the vehicle for Catholic doctrine frequently contain passages which by their unrestrained portrayal of immoral conduct prove a source of temptation to many of their readers. Though it may well be that such literature can be read in safety by the select few, so great is the danger to the virtue of the majority that its general publication is most undesirable. *The presentation of the Catholic way of life within the framework of fiction may be an admirable object, but it can never justify as a means to that end the inclusion of indecent and harmful material*” (quoted by Fr. M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J., *Sex in Contemporary Literature: Modern Classics and Condemned Literature*, 1960).

5. According to Catholic Principles of Moral Theology, and the common teaching of the saints and Fathers of the Church, when it concerns sins against the 6th and 9th commandments, a person must resist and avoid temptations of impurity, not read or study sensual or immoral stories about them. The reason is because Mankind is a fallen race, and by the wounds of original sin, all people have disordered inclinations towards sensual pleasure. As a consequence, a person becomes more attracted to temptations of impurity the more he thinks about the sensual object. It is the error of *Naturalism* to ignore or deny this.

To heal the wounds of original sin, we must turn to God, Who in His infinite goodness and mercy, will always give us the grace we need to overcome sin and temptation, *as long as we don't willfully seek temptation* by placing ourselves in the near occasion of sin. By the grace of Christ and the supernatural helps of the Church, such as frequent confession and Holy Communion, and by true devotion to Mary – especially by praying the daily rosary, wearing the scapular and making the five First Saturdays, the Catholic family will be protected against the evils of the modern world, and will be a reflection of the love of God for all to see.

6. Traditional Catholic Moral Theology Manuals teach: (a) “Opposition to temptations of the flesh must be sufficient to remove the temptation, when the temptation is due to the continuance of one's own sinful or unjustified act; for one is obliged to cease from sin or the unreasonable. This happens: (i) when the temptation is directly voluntary – for example, one who wishes to experience temptation and therefore reads a very seductive book must give over this reading; or (ii) when the temptation is not directly voluntary and is without sufficient reason – for example, one who experiences carnal temptation due to a book which he reads from idle curiosity must desist from the book. “

(b) “Opposition to temptations of the flesh must be such as is sufficient to keep one from consent, that is, to protect one against the proximate danger of sin. *That resistance is harmful which strengthens the temptation.* Hence, resistance by direct attack or by formal rejection is oftentimes to be omitted in favor of resistance by flight or by contempt. *It is a common teaching of the Fathers and Doctors, confirmed by experience, that dwelling on reasons and means of repelling passion often adds to its strength,* and that resolving mightily and expressly to crush a weak and passing temptation often serves only to give it longer life.” (e.g., see “*Manual of Moral Theology*,” by McHugh O.P. and Callan O.P., 1958, Vol. 2, p. 525, #2499 and #2500).

7. Note on the French Troubadours: One of the greatest forces that introduced paganism and immorality into medieval literature and poetry were the *French troubadours*. In the book “*St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Pilgrim Years*,” by James Brodrick, S.J., 1956, pp. 37-38, we read: “A huge tidal wave of romanticism flooded over Spain at the triumphant conclusion of the Moorish wars. It had long been gathering ever since, in the 12th and 13th centuries, Provençal troubadours, and trouvères from northern France, had wandered with their songs and tales along the famous road to Compostela. It was they who brought to Spain the legend of the Holy Grail, the whole Breton cycle of tales centering on King Arthur and his Round Table, and of course, the Chanson de Roland...”

A. Troubadours and Adulterous Courtly Love: Fr. Brodrick continues: “The troubadours did an immense disservice to social life and to religion by adding the element of gallantry to the old consecrated conception of chivalry, such as found in *El Cid*... The most deadly wound which the wandering minstrels inflicted on the older and nobler ideal of chivalry was their divinization of woman-in-the-abstract, and their exaltation of what they called *courtly love*. This has been well described as a gigantic system of bigamy, requiring every lady to have both a husband and a paramour, and every knight a goddess other than his wife, to be obeyed unhesitatingly no matter what she commanded, and upheld against all competitors.”

In the *New World Encyclopedia*, we read that *courtly love* is “a love at once illicit and morally elevating, passionate and self-disciplined, humiliating and exalting, human and transcendent.” And in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, we read: “The courtly lover existed to serve his lady. His love was invariably adulterous, marriage at that time usually the result of business interest or the seal of a power alliance. Ultimately, the lover saw himself as serving the all-powerful god of love and worshipping his lady-saint. Faithlessness was the mortal sin.”

The troubadours had a considerable influence on the development of medieval literature, and were among the first promoters of medieval music in the vernacular. They lived in southern France and played in many of the courts in Provence and Languedoc – the land of the gnostic Cathars and Albigensians. Their musical poetry recounted stories of chivalry and courtly love. Many songs were addressed to a married lover, perhaps because of the practice of “arranged marriages” at the time.

B. Troubadours and Neo-Manichaeism: The “*courtly love*” promoted by troubadours was actually contradictory, as it sought to reconcile sensual desire and spiritual attainment – which was largely due to the influence of the *dualist philosophy* of the Cathars. The Cathars professed a form of Gnosticism called *neo-Manichaeism*, which, like Gnosticism, was an *intellectual religion* that taught *salvation through knowledge*. Manichaeans were normally literary and well-educated, and since they considered ignorance to be a sin, they tended to despise the uneducated and simple people. (See: “*Manichaeism*” in the Catholic Encyclopedia).

The troubadours were instrumental in spreading the gnostic errors of the Cathars and Albigensians. In “*History of the Catholic Church*” by Mourret-Thompson, Vol. 4, Nov. 22, 1940, we read: “Scattered in different sections of France and Italy, the neo-Manichaean heresy spread especially in Provence... The poetry of the troubadours, which in Provence was then a sort of prelude to the literary awakening of Europe, became its harmonious mouthpiece” (pp. 524); and: “The songs of the troubadours of Provence, which were destined later to awaken the lyrical genius of St. Francis of Assisi, were powerful instruments of propaganda for the heresy... Through the minstrel’s songs a hundred times repeated, as well as by the regular preachers of the sect, the people accepted the doctrine of the ‘double’ God” (p. 525).

The style of the troubadours spread to northern France, where it inspired the *trouvère* movement. It also spread to Spain, Italy and Germany. They were dispersed from southern France during the Church’s crusade against the Albigensians (1209-1229). Some famous troubadours were *Guillaume d’Aquitaine* (1071-1127) and *Arnaut Daniel* (flourished 1180–1200). The most famous trouvère was *Chrétien de Troyes*, a late 12th century French poet famous for his stories on the *Legend of King Arthur*, and for creating the character *Lancelot*.

8. The Holy Office speaks against Sensual-Mystic Literature:

A. May 1927: Ten years after the promulgation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, “the Holy See expressed deep concern on a number of occasions over the increase of licentious literature. The most important of these pronouncements is contained in the *Instruction of the Holy Office on Sensual and Sensual-Mystic Literature* of May 3, 1927, which has been prefixed to subsequent editions of the Roman Index. After decrying the damage to souls wrought by ‘*literature which exploits sensuality and lust, or even a certain lascivious mysticism*,’ the instruction notes that ‘literary works, which exert so great an influence upon many, especially the young, would be able to afford innocent pleasure and even elevate the morals of the readers if only they kept within the bounds of decency’.” (see *Sex in Contemporary Literature*, 1960, by M.

Joseph Costelloe, S.J., Ph.D.).

B. The 1948 Edition of the Church Index again speaks against *Sensual-Mystic Literature* in its *Instruction*, which is directed to “all archbishops, bishops and other church administrators throughout the world. It points out the dangers in current literature which exploit sensuality and obscenity under the guise of culture. Many of these works are in the form of romances which deny all moral standards and ‘the authors...do not hesitate to give to their sensuality the appearance of rectitude by blending it with sacred things’.” (See “*What is the Index*,” 1952, p. 48, by Redmond A. Burke, C.S.V., PhD).

IV. Pope Pius XI: “Christian Education of Youth,” Dec. 31, 1929:

(35) “By nature parents have a right to the training of their children, but with this added duty that the education and instruction of the child be in accord with the end for which by God’s blessing it was begotten. Therefore, it is the duty of parents to make every effort to prevent any invasion of their rights in this matter, and to make absolutely sure that the education of their children remain under their own control in keeping with their Christian duty, and above all to refuse to send them to those schools in which there is danger of imbibing the deadly poison of impiety.”

(57) “Every Christian child or youth has a strict right to instruction in harmony with the teaching of the Church, the pillar and ground of truth. And whoever disturbs the pupil’s Faith in any way, does him grave wrong, inasmuch as he abuses the trust which children place in their teachers, and takes unfair advantage of their inexperience and of their natural craving for unrestrained liberty, at once illusory and false.”

(58) “It must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be; man, therefore, fallen from his original estate, but redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God, though without the preternatural privileges of bodily immortality or perfect control of appetite. There remain therefore, in human nature the effects of original sin, the chief of which are weakness of will and disorderly inclinations.”

(60) “Every form of pedagogic naturalism which in any way excludes or weakens supernatural Christian formation in the teaching of youth, is false. Every method of education founded, wholly or in part, on the denial or forgetfulness of original sin and of grace, and relying on the sole powers of human nature, is unsound.”

(65) “Another very grave danger is that naturalism which nowadays invades the field of education in that most delicate matter of purity of morals. Far too common is the error of those who, with dangerous assurance, and under an ugly term propagate a so-called sex-education, falsely imagining they can forearm youths against the dangers of sensuality by means purely natural, such as a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction for all indiscriminately, even in public; and, worse still, by exposing them at an early age to the occasions, in order to accustom them, so it is argued, and as it were to harden them against such dangers.”

(66) “Such persons grievously err in refusing to recognize the inborn weakness of human nature, and the law of which the Apostle speaks, fighting against the law of the mind; and also in ignoring the experience of facts, from which it is clear that, particularly in young people, evil practices are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as of weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions, and unsupported by the means of grace.”

(67) “Such is our misery and inclination to sin, that often in the very things considered to be remedies against sin, we find occasions for and inducements to sin itself. Hence it is of the highest importance that a good father, while discussing with his son a matter so delicate, should be well on his guard and not descend to details, nor refer to the various ways in which this infernal hydra destroys with its poison so large a portion of the world; otherwise it may happen that instead of extinguishing this fire, he unwittingly stirs or kindles it in the simple and tender heart of the child. Speaking generally, during the period of childhood it suffices to employ those remedies which produce the double effect of opening the door to the virtue of

purity and closing the door upon vice.”

(80) “For the mere fact that a school gives some religious instruction (often extremely stinted), does not bring it into accord with the rights of the Church and of the Christian family, or make it a fit place for Catholic students. To be this, it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and text-books in every branch, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that Religion may be in very truth the foundation and crown of the youth’s entire training; and this in every grade of school, not only the elementary, but the intermediate and the higher institutions of learning as well.

“To use the words of Leo XIII: ‘It is necessary not only that religious instruction be given to the young at certain fixed times, but also that every other subject taught, be permeated with Christian piety. If this is wanting, if this sacred atmosphere does not pervade and warm the hearts of masters and scholars alike, little good can be expected from any kind of learning, and considerable harm will often be the consequence’.”

(86) “And if, when occasion arises, it be deemed necessary to have the students read authors propounding false doctrine, for the purpose of refuting it, this will be done after due preparation and with such an antidote of sound doctrine, that it will not only do no harm, but will be an aid to the Christian formation of youth.”

(87) “Greater stress must be laid on the employment of apt and solid methods of teaching, and, what is still more important, on bringing into full conformity with the Catholic faith, what is taught in literature, in the sciences, and above all in philosophy, on which depends in great part the right orientation of the other branches of knowledge.”

(88) “Perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well-grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required by their important office; who cherish a pure and holy love for the youths confided to them, because they love Jesus Christ and His Church, of which these are the children of predilection; and who have therefore sincerely at heart the true good of family and country.”

(91) “Worthy of all praise and encouragement therefore are those educational associations which have for their object to point out to parents and educators, by means of suitable books and periodicals, the dangers to morals and religion that are often cunningly disguised in books and theatrical representations. In their spirit of zeal for the souls of the young, they endeavor at the same time to circulate good literature and to promote plays that are really instructive, going so far as to put up at the cost of great sacrifices, theaters and cinemas, in which virtue will have nothing to suffer and much to gain.”

(92) “This necessary vigilance does not demand that young people be removed from the society in which they must live and save their souls; but that today more than ever they should be forewarned and forearmed as Christians against the seductions and the errors of the world, which, as Holy Writ admonishes us, is all “concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and pride of life.”

V. Additional Quotes from the Church and Saints:

1. The Council of Trent says: “Ancient books, however, that were written by pagans are allowed on account of the elegance and perfection of their style, *but on no account are they to be read by youths.*” (See “*Tridentine Index, 1564, 7th Rule*” on Forbidden Books).

Also, in the ***Catechism of the Council of Trent***, we read: “Next to the sexual excitement, usually provoked by too studied an elegance of dress, follows another, which is *indecent and obscene conversation*. Obscene language is a torch which lights up the worst passions of the young mind; and the Apostle has said, that evil communications corrupt good manners. Immodest and passionate songs and dances are most productive of this same effect and are, therefore, cautiously to be avoided.

“*In the same class are to be numbered soft and obscene books which must be avoided no less than indecent pictures.* All such things possess a fatal influence in exciting to unlawful attractions, and in inflaming the mind of youth. In these matters the pastor should take special pains to see that the faithful most

carefully observe the pious and prudent regulations of the Council of Trent.”

2. Pope Leo XIII: “Classical works of ancient or more recent authors, if they are infected with this stain of turpitude, on account of the elegance and perfection of their style are permitted only to those who are excused by reason of their office or teaching; *but on no account are they to be given to youths or young men to translate or read unless they have been carefully expurgated*” (in his Apostolic Constitution “*Officiorum ac Munerum*”, Jan. 25, 1897).

3. Pope Pius XII, in his Aug. 7, 1940 *Address to Newly Married Couples*, gave this example: “‘I am no longer a child,’ a young lady will explain, ‘and I know life, and have therefore the wish and the right to know it still better.’ But does not the poor girl realize that her talk is like that of Eve when confronted with the forbidden fruit? And does she think that to know, love, and enjoy life it is necessary to investigate all its abuses and ugliness? ‘I am no longer a child,’ a young man also will say, ‘and at my age, sensual descriptions and voluptuous scenes have no effect.’ Is he sure? If it should be true, it would be an indication of an unconscious perversion, the result of bad reading already indulged . . . The danger of bad reading is, under some aspects even worse than that of evil companions, because it can make itself more treacherously familiar.”

4. St. Clement of Alexandria: “It is imperative that we neither listen to nor look at nor talk about obscene things . . . Writings that treat of evil deeds must be considered indecent talk, such as the description of adultery or pederasty or similar things” (in “*Paedagogus*” 2.6).

5. St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “To preserve chastity and at the same time to expose oneself to the proximate occasion of sin, is a greater miracle than to raise a dead man to life.” (See *St. Alphonsus Liguori, Sermon for the 1st Sunday after Easter*).

6. St. Thomas Aquinas, in his *commentary on Eccl. 3:27* (“A stubborn heart shall fare evil at the last; and he that loveth danger shall perish therein”) says: “When we expose ourselves to danger, God abandons us.”

7. St. Philip Neri: “In the war against the vice of impurity, the victory is gained by cowards—that is, by those who fly from the occasions of this sin. But the man who exposes himself to it, arms his flesh and renders it so powerful, that it will be morally impossible for him to resist its attacks.” (See *St. Alphonsus Liguori, Sermon for the 1st Sunday after Easter*).

8. St. Alphonsus Liguori, in his *Sermon on the 1st Sunday after Easter*, declares: (a) “When a dangerous occasion is present, it violently excites our corrupt desires, so that it is then very difficult to resist them: because God withholds efficacious helps from those who voluntarily expose themselves to the occasions of sin;” (b) “When the occasion in which we are placed is really necessary, the Lord always helps us to avoid sin; but we sometimes imagine certain necessities which are not sufficient to excuse us;” (c) “*Being compelled by exorcisms to tell the sermons which displeased him the most, the Devil confessed that it was the sermon on avoiding the occasions of sin.*”

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam