

## TOWARD A SOUND VIEW OF EMOTION

### Archdeacon Ramsis Naguib

Young people frequently experience an emotion that attracts them to the opposite sex. They then enter into relationships that they imagine are a pure and mature love. Frequently, these end in disappointment, failure, or sin.

This does not mean that pure love does not exist, for it certainly does. We need to know its characteristics and requirements.

It is an inner feeling that grows spontaneously, without the need for lies or trickery. Each lover gives of himself without pretense or effort. He or she makes sacrifices without feeling that they are too costly. Each considers the other, for he does not seek anything for himself or the satisfaction of his own desires.

Each of them is considerate of the other, bears his or her burdens, is upset when the other is, and rejoices in the loved one's joy. It is a love that gives and does not take.

It is before all else a love that bears its responsibilities, and carefully and responsibly considers the next step. A love like this can only end in marriage.

In the sacrament of holy matrimony, each of the partners carries out the responsibilities of life. Each gives himself wholly to the other, for they unite and become one body.

It is married love that precedes sex and leads to it so that sex, as previously mentioned, becomes an expression of this love, preserving it, rendering it sweet, strengthening it, and making it grow.

This is holy married love in which there is a pure bond. It is the love that gives true freedom to man so that he meets life with a humble heart. It sanctifies sex for the purpose of childbearing and to the glory of God.

It is a great love which abandons all that is childish and immature in the way of daydreams and the reckless passions of youth. It is a Christian love that the church endorses in the sacrament of marriage.

## An Objection to be Discussed

The question might be raised by a youth who says: **“I love this girl but have no intention of marrying. In spite of that, I have no evil thoughts.”**

I want you to listen to me, my friend, before I end my discussion with a just and fair statement.

A young man often justifies himself when he falls in love with a certain young woman and has a romantic relationship with her by saying that he has no evil intentions or any lustful thoughts, and that he lives with his love and thoughts in a holy temple. I say to this young man: **“Beware of the wiles of Satan, for he is crafty and his victims are strong”**. You are overconfident. Your enemy, the devil, is fighting you, but this time with trickery and deception.

Lust has found a resting place in you, and you have given in to it. He does not need to arouse it in you, for it already possesses you and has enslaved you. The strange thing is that while you are under its sway, the devil fools you into thinking that you are leading a pure life. That is why I want to warn you about this deception.

“Is there any objection to being friendly with a girl whom I admire and whom I have the intention of marrying? It is as though the young man wants to say that there is nothing you can object to now since I am seeking marriage and, consequently, pure love as well.

I do not want to be unduly severe with you, but I visualize the young man who asks this question and I would like to answer it:

+ You are probably one of those vital young men who has just entered university or an institute. You meet a girl you admire and whose characteristics and traits appeal to you. She returns your feelings. You say to yourself: **“It would be good to reciprocate her feelings, for I may lose her. This girl is interested in me and there is nothing to justify wasting this opportunity.”** You then go on to say: **“What should prevent my thinking of marriage? She suits me very well and I too suit her.”**

**I do not want to enter into a long discussion, but allow me to bring a few points to your attention:**

- + The liking you now feel may be honest and sincere up till now, but I am afraid you could get locked into it and it might become confused with love.
  
- + You could be locked into it in such a way that you lose your ability to think straight. You do not even look a few steps ahead to see the reality that awaits you.
  
- + Have you estimated how long it will take before you graduate?
  
- + When you graduate, will you be ready for marriage?
  
- + Have you considered the implications of this undertaking and its costs?

If you lock yourself into this relationship as one who locks himself into a cell, and answer: "Yes, I am ready",

- + How can you guarantee that you will remain in this condition, or that she will remain in this condition? Is it not possible that just as you admire her now, you might admire another later, and she might do the same?

**Some Candid Advice**

Do you think that your outlook on life while you are still looking at a distant future will remain the same when you graduate?

Can you claim that your understanding of the implications of this undertaking, with all its sweetness and bitterness and all its happiness and sadness, will be the same as your understanding of the situation when you actually face it?

I believe that I have put before you some fair questions that will help you form an opinion of the matter.

## **My dear brother,**

It would be useful to face yourself simply, to answer honestly, and to take your ideas to your father confessor who has a lot of experience, so that he may help you and so that your life may be pure and clean.

The young man who asks these questions might be about to graduate or might be one of those who are starting out on their working lives. Here, the case is different and needs different advice.

+ I imagine you to be a religious youth who is kind and of good character.

+ I imagine you to be serious in what you do and what you think.

+ I imagine the bitter struggle that is taking place in your spiritual life.

You may conduct yourself well where your sexual instincts are concerned; you neither descend into the mire nor do you exploit anyone.

Your assessment of the situation could be right. Your perception that this girl would make a good wife for you could be right. Or it could be wrong.

In accordance with your circumstances, your situation, your life, your social level:

+ Who will think with you and reassure you that what has awoken inside you will run its normal course?

+ Who will share with you in realistic and wise thinking about the requirements of the next stage?

+ Who will help you to come to a decision, either yes or no, someone who is far removed from cheap emotionalism or recklessness?

I therefore beg you that you do not remain alone. Thoughts can overcome you and end your

spiritual life. I beg you to involve your spiritual guide, who may be your father confessor, with you. Place your thoughts before him and do not hide anything from him, even the feelings in your heart. Talk to him frankly and discuss all the details of the situation with him. Do not go to a friend for advice, for he is in the same boat as you are, perplexed and inexperienced. If you cannot find a guide or a father confessor, go to an older and more experienced man who has experienced life and who honors the holy and noble life so that you can trust his judgment. Don't be hasty, but have patience and don't jump into anything. I want also to remind you of the prayer chamber where you ask for God's advice; His guidance guarantees that you will have a holy spiritual life here, and a happy eternity.

Ask the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is near you, near your young man's heart. By His grace, He will lead you to the sources of salvation and joy.