

## A Mother's Point Of View

### Modesty in Thoughts, Words & Actions

OVER the past few months, we have been asked to write more on chastity and modesty. Since this is the beginning of a new year, we thought these would be good virtues to work on so we can be better role models for our children and our community, and witnesses to the Catholic faith, with which we are so blessed.

We have had a couple of good, holy priests in our parish who were a great asset in encouraging and demanding modesty in dress, so much so, that communion was refused to women improperly dressed. But never did this happen without Father going immediately after Mass to instruct the person about his reasons for doing so. These priests were very gentle in their approach. However; one definitely got the message that it was not appropriate, or respectful, to approach Our Lord at the communion rail improperly dressed. It was likewise made clear that it is a sin to be a distraction in church, or to be an occasion of sin to another.

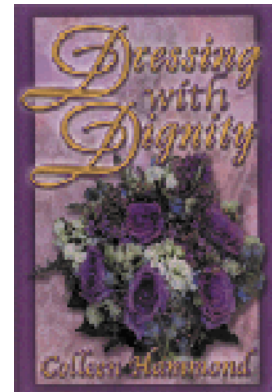
We have always respected those priests for their courage and commitment to not only teach the necessity of modesty, but to enforce it. After all, if we want to call ourselves, or claim to be, Catholics, we must live as witnesses to the rules and guidelines Holy Mother Church has handed down to us. In these modern times we have drifted so far from what the Church expects of Her Children that we most often cannot distinguish Catholics from non-Catholics. As Catholics, we are all called to become holy, to become saints, and to bring others into the One True Church. We are so grateful to Almighty God for our faithful and courageous priests who aren't afraid to preach and teach the truths upon which Christ founded His Church.

In all fairness to our Catholic population, many have grown up in the Church never being properly catechized on Her teachings. If they were taught the reasons why things were done as they are in the Church, most would accept, rather than question, the customs. As good Catholics hungry to know and understand our faith, we must likewise encourage our priests to teach us these truths.

Sometimes I wonder how, even if (in my lifetime), the faith will be restored. To tell you the truth, the only place I see any attempt to restore the faith Christ gave us, is in the traditional Latin Rite. The rituals and ceremonies, the use of sacramentals, the modesty, silence and respect at Mass

– all are being practiced there. It is there where I see an attempt to restore the faith. Admittedly, there is a long way to go, but at least it is a start!

I have recently read a book by Colleen Hammond, entitled, *Dressing with Dignity*. It is probably the most thorough book I have ever read on modesty and I am using it as the basis for this article. It's a book I highly recommend to be used by all family members, not just the women. After all, everyone should be more modest, not only in dress, but also in words and actions. When we meet someone, the first thing we notice is the way they are dressed. If one is modestly dressed, their actions are usually modest and they are more apt to be respected by others. If we dress like a floozy, we attract for sex; if we dress modestly, we are respecting others, and looking for respect. As Catholics, we have a moral obligation to dress modestly so as not to sin, or be an occasion of sin for another.



Colleen Hammond

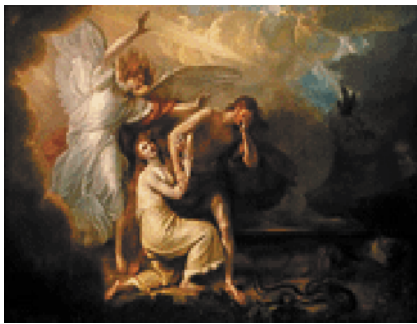
Colleen was a former cable network anchor, actress, model and beauty queen. In her book, she explains how God touched her heart, and how she gave up her way of life in order to become an example to others through her talks and books, and by being a more modest person in her role as wife, mother, and Catholic. She begins her book by quoting from the Genesis 2:25: "And they were both naked; to wit, Adam and his wife; and they were not ashamed."

"Naked and not ashamed? That's pretty hard to imagine," writes Colleen. Adam and Eve were born without Original Sin. Their love for one another was simple, pure, innocent, and with the utmost respect for one another. They had infused knowledge and possessed all the virtues. In my simple mind, this is almost as difficult to understand as is being naked in front of God and man!

From my own experience, I recall a friend once telling me that her family had gone to California to visit so people they knew, who lived in a nudist colony. Needless to say, I was shocked to hear that everyone had to strip down before entering the place. Can you imagine taking your children

to such a place, to say nothing of going in yourself? And yet we see in these modern times, people who come to church in the skimpiest and most revealing attire! Sadly, one only has to go to a movie or turn on the television to see as much.

What has happened to the sense of the sacred, to the respect, purity, and innocence God created in Adam and Eve? It all started over one little act of disobedience on the part of Adam and Eve when they gave in to the temptation by the devil! They, as well as the whole human race, suffered for this one act. They knew immediately that they had done wrong, for they suddenly felt ashamed and were aware of their nakedness. They hid from God, and looked for something with which to cover themselves.



The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden

The same is true when we sin, and especially regarding sins against purity. One senses a nakedness before God, and can even feel as though everyone knows about the sin. One loses the innocence that was so precious, that inner peace of soul, and respect, because of guilt. The sad part of it is, like Adam and Eve, one can never regain that same peace and respect again! That one act can change a whole person's life, never to be regained. The Sacrament of Confession can take away the sin on the soul, but, like Adam and Eve, making reparation can take a lifetime.

If only we could help our children to understand and respect, to treasure and preserve this great virtue of purity. In this way they can always be pure and innocent in carrying out the calling to which Almighty God has created them. How much pain could be avoided in these lives if they but lived by the rules given them by Our Lord through Holy Mother Church. We are given them to us to help avoid pain and sin so we can become holy. That is the way God intended life to be! Purity makes us free to be who we are, the person God created us to be. That is how we become a saint, that is how we raise saints. And, as Catholics, we have so much information to help us. As an example, in the wonderful book about St. Therese of Lisieux's family, *The Story of a Family*, we can discover

how Louis and Zelig Martin, soon to be saints themselves, raised their sons and daughters to be saints.

As parents, we can strongly urge our young people to seek the particular vocation that God has created for them. Whether they marry, remain single, or become a Bride of Christ in the religious life, we must encourage them to enter that vocation with a pure heart. Only then can they properly serve God in that vocation. It will protect them from much unnecessary pain, misery, and sorrow in fulfilling that role. And God knows that we all need all the grace and help we can receive in this world so full of evil.

If one chooses to date, the goal should be to find a proper spouse. When dating, as when one marries, the responsibility to protect the other person in the relationship in every way is very real. He or she, too, is a child of God and must be treated with the utmost respect. One would not want to put that person in an occasion of sin or lead them to sin. In seeking out a spouse, one should pray for one that is chaste, pure, and innocent so they will be a good spouse and a good parent. "A chaste marriage is the basis of the Christian Family! Chastity is that moral virtue which disposes us to be pure in soul and body. God requires chastity from everyone, in all states of life. Those who keep themselves pure in soul and body are like the angels on earth" (*My Catholic Faith*, p. 97).

Have you ever had the experience of hearing cloistered nuns chanting the Divine Office? Their voices reflect their chastity and purity, the music so soft, so sweet and angelic. To me, they are like the angels on the earth!

The greatest example we had of angels on the earth, of course, was Our Blessed Mother. We should look to her in purity and modesty of dress and actions. From all of the accounts we have of her, we are told that her very presence demanded the utmost respect! Her clothes were always loose and flowing, never snug or revealing. Her face, hands, and sometimes her feet, were the only exposed portion of her body. Her movements were modest, her voice, soft and gentle, a real Lady! We should imitate Our Mother in Heaven as much as possible.

In *Dressing With Dignity* (p. 29), Colleen quotes Dr. Alice von Hildebrand: "From the time that Adam and Eve were booted out of the Garden of Eden, it has been a sign of respectability and distinction to have clothing totally veiling our bodies-especially the female body." She makes the point that anything that is precious, mysterious, and sacred is hidden from view. It is veiled. She goes on to write:

This reminds me of one of the things my Grandmother told me when I was little: In nature, God made the valuable things difficult to get to. I heard the Rev. Billy Graham say that same thing once in a sermon. And even Muhammad Ali said the same thing to his daughter. But Ali went a bit further: Where do you find diamonds? Deep down in the ground, covered and protected. Where do you find pearls? Deep down at the bottom of the ocean, covered up and protected in a beautiful shell. Where do you find gold? Way down in the mine, covered over by layers and layers of rock. You've got to work hard to get them... your body is sacred. You're far more precious than diamonds and pearls, and you should be covered too.

Yes, our bodies are much more precious than diamonds, pearls, or gold! After all, through Baptism we are temples of the Holy Spirit. Shouldn't our precious bodies be kept pure, veiled, and hidden from view?



Dr. von Hildebrand

Dr. von Hildebrand continues: "In scripture, we see veils as being a sign of respect and sacredness. They are used to cover the chalice, the Holy of Holies, The Blessed Sacrament, and other sacred items in the church. "All these veiling show respect and reverence for mystery and sacredness." Dr. von Hildebrand goes on to say, "Women, by their physical nature, are the very vessels of life. So every woman, due to the nature of her God-given femininity, has a certain mystery and sacredness, which is her ability to cooperate with her husband and with God in the sacredness of creation. How appropriate that a woman's awe-inspiring privilege is recognized by veiling! What an honor we have as women to be given the glorious ability to carry another human life within our bodies."

Even though Eve is considered *The Mother of all the Living*, it is Our Blessed Mother, the new Eve, who brought back honor to all women with her *Fiat*.

In her book, Colleen goes on to give the history of the corruptive fashions in the world. The part I found most interesting, however, was that which addressed the part the "Illuminated Masons" (Freemasons) played in immodesty of women's dress. The author describes the desire of the Freemasons to destroy the Catholic Church and Christianity (Ibid. p. 56). They admitted it couldn't be ruined from the outside, so they would have to make a "two-pronged" attack. The founder of the Illuminati, Adam Weishaupt, had formulated one part of the strategy late in the 1700's. "We will infiltrate that place (The Vatican), and once

inside, we will never come out. We will bore from within until nothing remains but an empty shell." The Freemason plan included the infiltration of the sacristies, seminaries, and monasteries. But it would take time for the Freemasons to worm their way into Catholic institutions.

The other part of their plan was to use women. "In order to destroy Catholicism, it is necessary to commence by suppressing woman... But since we cannot suppress woman, let us corrupt her with the Church..." Freemasons apparently understood that women are the moral compasses of society, just as the serpent knew this and approached Eve. Even Confucius said that the woman is the moral root of society, and the culture will only grow in proportion to the moral strength of its women" (Ibid. p. 56).

The Freemasons not only wanted to infiltrate religious orders, but in order to corrupt chastity and purity, the fashion world as well. To this end, their own people became widely involved in the fashion industry.

On page 61 of her book, Colleen writes: "Slacks appeared on the fashion runways of Paris in 1920. The next year, Pope Benedict XV expressed his shock that women would embrace the current fashion trends and styles of dancing. He wrote:

One cannot sufficiently deplore the blindness of so many women of every age and condition; made foolish by desire to please, they



Pope Benedict XV

do not see to what a degree the indecency of their clothing shocks every honest man, and offends God. Most of them would formerly have blushed for those toilettes (outfits) as for a grave fault against Christian modesty; now it does not suffice for them to exhibit them on the public thoroughfares; they do not fear to cross the threshold of the churches, to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and even to bear the seducing food of shameful passions to the Eucharistic Table where one receives the Heavenly Author of purity. And we speak not of these exotic and barbarous dances recently imported into fashionable circles, one more shocking than the other; one cannot imagine anything more suitable for banishing all the remains of modesty.

Wow, and that was because of slacks! One can only wonder what Pope Benedict XV would say about the sleazy outfits seen in our churches today. Maybe someone of higher authority should say something!

The Freemasons went on to reveal their motives and plans: (Ibid. p. 62)

Religion does not fear the dagger's point; but it can vanish under corruption. Let us not grow tired of corruption. We may use a pretext, such as sports, hygiene, health resorts. It is necessary to corrupt, that our boys and girls practice nudism in dress. To avoid too much reaction, one would have to progress in a methodical manner; first, undress up to the elbow, then up to the knees; then arms and legs completely uncovered; later the upper part of the chest, the shoulders, etc.



Pope Pius XI

Well, it looks as though the Freemason's have accomplished that goal!

On Sept. 24, 1928, Cardinal Vicar General of Pope Pius XI gave detailed instructions on modesty of dress for women. (Ibid. p. 63)

"We recall that a dress cannot be called decent which is cut deeper than two fingers' breadth under the pit of the throat, which does not cover the arms at least to the elbows, and scarcely reaches a bit beyond the knees. Furthermore, dresses of transparent material are improper."

Pope Pius XII cautioned women that, if certain styles were an occasion of sin for others, it was their duty not to wear them. He also warned mothers to make sure their children were dressed modestly (Ibid. p. 64).



Pope Pius XII

The good of our soul is more important than that of our body; and we have to prefer the spiritual welfare of our neighbor to our bodily comforts... If a certain kind of dress constitutes a grave and proximate occasion of sin, and endangers the salvation of your soul and others, it is your duty to give it up.

He also admonishes mothers who allow the children God has entrusted them with to dress immodestly. We will have much to answer for if we continue to follow the world's mode of fashion!

Anne McGinn Cillis, a spiritual daughter of St. Padre Pio tells of a Canadian lady who was refused absolution in confession by Padre Pio until she went back to her shop in Vancouver and disposed of all the slacks and pant suits she was selling. Padre Pio also refused to hear confessions of women whose skirts were shorter than 8 inches below the knee!

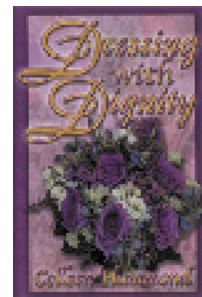
In summing up this article, I'd again like to quote from Colleen's book. "Femininity is an assignment from

God. It is how God created us. It is a character that is printed deeply upon us, which is made apparent in our physical bodies, and by how we speak, act, and dress. We were not created to be men. We were created to be women! The Church teaches that men and women are equal in dignity, yet separate in role and function, and that those roles and functions are complementary!"

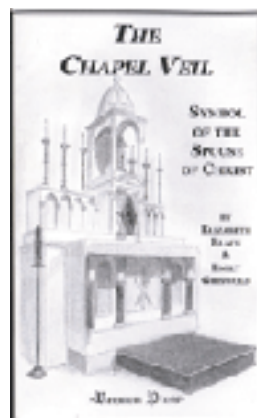
God created us male or female, for a particular reason. We must carry out that role to the very best of our ability with all the graces provided through the Church. If we practice purity and modesty with our mind, heart, and soul, we will bring much honor and glory to Almighty God in our daily duty. In so doing, many lives will be touched and brought into the one, true faith, and many souls will be saved. That is our mission as Catholics! †

### Dressing With Dignity Covers It All:

- The forces behind the 20th-century revolution in women's fashion.
- Specific statements about manner of dress from Popes, Bishops, Saints, and Sacred Scripture.
- Practical guidelines for choosing modest, tasteful attire.
- How to talk to teenagers about the privilege of femininity so they will want to dress with modesty and dignity.
- How to awaken chivalry in men and be treated with respect.
- How to regain and teach others the charm of interior and exterior femininity!
- How to dress in an attractive, dignified, classy manner!
- Resources on where to find beautiful, modest clothing!
- And much, much more...



### Dressing With Dignity – \$10.00



\$3.25

### The Chapel Veil

*Is the chapel veil extinct?*

Apparently not! This booklet gives the reasons, based on Holy Scripture and the Church Fathers, why two young ladies in college wear the chapel veil in the presence of our Lord.

In these two essays the chapel veil is shown as a symbol which helps the faithful understand the vocation and identity of woman, both in the order of creation and in the New Covenant sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. **The time has come for a restoration of this traditional practice!**