

MEN

CALLED TO FOLLOW

CHRIST

AS MEN

A GOSPEL FOR MEN

We are living in an age which is characterized by stark contradictions.

On the one hand, we are enjoying the beginnings of an age of technological progress, which makes available to us, each year, new inventions and products which make everyday life easier, more productive, and more fascinating.

On the other hand, we are in the midst of a profound moral crisis, wherein even the most basic virtues of the natural order are openly denied or no longer understood.

For this reason, even for men, it is necessary today, to know what it means to be a man, and what it ought to mean to be a man.

More so for Catholic men, since Our Most High Lord and Savior gave us a very good example of what it means to be a man, an example which He intended for us to into practice in the natural and supernatural orders. This *Gospel for men*, thus, is good news.

*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart,
brings forth that which is good*
(Luke 6:45)

This short tract, will, however, not explain everything about what it means to be a man, and how a man comports himself or ought to comport himself.

Nor will it be a catechism about general issues which regard men, as that would take far more space than is allowed here.

Nor will it be a guide for the formation of men, though confessors and spiritual directors might profit much from what will be presented.

Rather it will present nothing more than common sense, Church teaching and some aspects of the perennial philosophy of man (first proposed of Aristotle, but applied within the context of what is now known about personal development), regarding the maturity of the affective part of man, which every man should have or arrive at.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN “TO BE A MAN”?

This is will seem, at first, glance too obvious a question; for no human being can be ignorant of the answer.

But this tract will not deal with the obvious answer, which would merely be regard physical characteristics. It will deal rather with what this question seeks to know in the affective order.

To understand this question better, let us first return in mind, to the beginnings of our memories about ourselves.

Since, I am writing for men and to men, I ask, therefore, that any woman reading this tract, put it down and stop; since from this point on you won't have the human experience necessary to understand what I am going to say.

WE ALL WERE ONCE BOYS, NOT MEN...

There was a time when, though we were, according to nature, no less men than we are now, we were called “boys”, and we saw nothing wrong in that.

Ours was a life, then — I hope — which was much more trouble free and innocent than the one we experience today.

However, it is true to say, as Aristotle is said to have first opined, that “whereas woman are born women; men must become men.”

This *becoming* is the passage to adulthood, which is necessary for a man. And not all men make that passage, or make it well, as is obvious enough from human experience.

This tract, however, is not going to discuss theories of Freudian or Jungian psychology, or those of other schools of modern psychology; it is merely going to apply some Aristotelian principles, in the light of Christ’s teaching, to discuss something which most men never attempt to think about; but which we

should think about, as it will help us be good men, of the kind of which Our Lord speaks, when He says: *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is good* (Luke 6:45).

THE END OF BOYHOOD

Boys once knew nothing different, for the most part, about themselves, than girls did; except that they normally played with boys and were physically different from girls.

But when we passed through the years of 12-14 years of age, there came changes to us, which not only altered our bodies, but gave us something new to experience within us; something of which no one could explain to us, and of which we could not speak of to others; because it was something we alone experienced, when we experienced it; and which had no fixed or certain relation with the outside world, which would enable us to speak about it with other men, as an objective reality.

OUR FIVE SENSES AND OUR INTERIOR SENSATION

To be more precise about what will be said, further on; let us first admit some basic distinctions.

Every man has a body and a soul. The soul is by nature *immortal*. The body by nature is *corruptible*. The soul by nature, though not corruptible according to nature, is susceptible to variations in its acts and habits, in regard to the use or non use of its powers and faculties.

There is a nexus, however, between body and soul, wherein what is sensed in the body, can be reflected, accepted, withstood, or yielded to in the soul. This takes place in the sensible part of the soul.

To understand this better, let us first consider, something very common, as our example to work with: sense experience. If a ripe, golden delicious apple, is at hand; you can see it, smell it, and if you take it into your hand, feel it. You can also taste it, if you take a bite out of it.

Now regardless of whether you like apples of this kind, or not, what you see, smell, feel, taste, is pretty much like what every other human being sees, smells, feels, or tastes.

Yet there is another way of sensing or feeling that apple, which no other human person can experience, in the same exact manner you do; and of which you have no way of comparing to the experience of another human being; since this experience is most interior, and most personal.

This being the case, I can only talk about it in generalities, in formalities, or philosophically; as I cannot actually talk about any such experience which you or I have both had and shared, since this kind of inner-sensing of the apple is absolutely unique in every individual.

Yes, you can tell me, that you found that apple very pleasing; but that is a very vague manner of communicating to me what you experience of the apple was like, in your soul. Alas, we cannot speak more precisely about these experiences of pleasure or displeasure, but let us try to describe in generalities what

happens in such an experience.

OUR INTERIOR SENSATION: WHAT IT IS, AND WHY ITS IS IMPORTANT

Here, I am not speaking about the common sense, that faculty of the sensible part of man, in which all the senses and memory and imagination combine what they hold and have received to form in the soul a species of the object sensed.

I am speaking, rather, of the action or process of acts, by which one, reacts to the sensation of the object.

This act of interior fruition, or sensation, is thus not a faculty, but rather an act of the sense appetite occasioned directly by the external sensation of the object or indirectly by the internal reminiscence of other external occasions of sensation of that same or similar object; which act is a movement toward pleasure or disgust.

Thus, when a man sees a delicious apple and knows in the sensible part of his soul, of its agree-

ableness, he experiences in his sensible part a movement of pleasure; which movement his will can consent to or not; but which movement is distinguished from any act of the will in choosing to take that apple and eat it.

This inner sensation is something, which as Catholics, but especially men called to follow Christ as priests or religious, we should pay a great deal of attention to, because the habit of taking pleasure or joy in any creature, whether that creature is corporeal or spiritual, has a manner of ruling or inclining our hearts and minds, in a manner which often dominates us, and hinders our authentic liberty in Christ.

THE PASSAGE TO MANHOOD: THE INITIAL PHASE

Thus, when we made the passage from boyhood to manhood, each of us experienced a series of interior sensations in regard to each of two phases.

First, there was the phase when we began to sense in our bodies, what we had never sensed before; some

sensations were confined to one part of our body, others spread over to all of our body; others were much more interior to the body, yet were corporeal. This is the initial phase of the passage to manhood.

Not all men have ever reflected intellectually upon the variety of these sensations, all of which are corporeal, but it will be useful to distinguish them here.

First, these sensations are not acts of “interior sensation”, in the sense I have defined the movement of the sense appetite as a consequence of any physical sensation felt in the body, or of any memory or imagination in the sensible part of the soul, or of any decision or thought in the rational part. Rather they are real corporeal sensations, which never occur without some physical movement or reaction in the body.

These sensible corporeal sensations, the capacity to experience which characterize properly onset of the passage to manhood are:

- 1) The feeling of pleasure in that part of the body that makes us men.
- 2) The voluntary, or seemingly non-voluntary movements in this part of the body.

3) A particular physical sensation deeper down in that part of our body which makes us men.

4) The general sensation in our entirely body of pleasure, often associated with the first 3 kinds of sensation, or memories of these.

5) An electrifying sensation which takes place in a snapshot, which goes through all our body, which normally occurs when a man beholds the physical beauty of a woman.

Finally, the experience that any one or more of these sensations can occur independent of the others; whether when we will or incite them, or when the body reacts to other stimuli which in some manner incite it to experience these.

Note, that these 5 sensations, considered as sensations are neither morally good nor morally evil; since that a man can sense these is a natural endowment given him by God the Creator, for the purpose of human procreation. These sensations are according to nature, good; not evil. For sensations, of themselves, can be called “impure” only if they arise from a morally evil act of impurity or are associated with

the suggestion of accomplishing such evil acts. But whether they be “impure” in this sense, that is in the moral sense, all sensations according to their natures as sensations, are properly not impure nor evil, but good, for they are part-and-parcel of the nature of man which God has created and with which He has endowed man, to be capable of fulfilling the end of procreation.

A MAN’S FIRST INTERIOR CONFRONTATION OF BEING A MAN: THE SECOND PHASE

Now the experiences of these 5 corporeal sensations at the onset of becoming a man, is something of which we normally never speak to any other man about, not even our father, if we have a close relation with him. We understand, after a short, time, that this is part and parcel of being a man, and is something too intimate to speak about with anyone; nor is it necessary or normally proper to do so.

Yet, this onset of new sensations does produce in

many men — in the context of their ignorance of the moral law, and lack of a good Christian formation, especially regarding their lack of spiritual formation and experience in self-discipline and self-governance, in regard to both body and soul — a period of confrontation, which in many men consists in a certain conflict and the resolution of which forms the conscience of the man and the affective habit of the man, in regard to his capacity of responding in an interior sensation to each and every new experience of his manhood.

A youth with a good Christian formation, at this time of his life, has the grace of receiving at the proper moment, and in a modest and chaste context, sufficient formation and information to form his conscience aright. But alas, due to human shame and a sense that all of this is too private and too intimate, nearly no man seeks or obtains this proper formation at the right time.

The result of this is that many a man develops a habit of interior sensation, in regard to these new corporeal experiences, which includes (a) some habit of sin, (b) some habit of sinful ignorance, and (3) some

errors in judgment, all of which incline him inexorably to loose the habit of chastity with which he was endowed by the Sacrament of Baptism and perhaps even to lose those special graces of infused virtue which came to him with his first experience of a call to serve God or follow Christ.

5 KINDS OF WRONG SOLUTION, IN THIS SECOND PHASE

As St. Thomas says, “all sin begins with error in the mind.” And hence, so as to uproot all sin, it is very useful to our salvation to strive to understand better these matters, seeking to understand their cause, by classifying the errors which often enter into the mind in this second phase.

First, since *the cause and effect relationship* between external stimuli, our diet, our daily habits of hygiene, digestion, exercise, our body’s peculiar traits or metabolism, *is normally something of which no young man has the foggiest idea*; he is left to himself to interpret and explain the cause of these new sensi-

ble experiences and to judge for himself whether they be good or bad. Hence he might attribute the cause of these experiences, wrongly.

The most common wrong solution in this secondary phase of judgment, is the a common error, which arises from the consideration that every bodily function is something good according to nature, given to us by God, which error says: *it is licit to take pleasure in what is pleasurable*; and which error, when applied these new experiences, engenders this false conclusion: *every such pleasure is always morally good, and therefore it is always lawful to take pleasure in such things*.

It is very difficult for young men who have the habit of living merely on the natural level, to affront these new experiences in any other manner, on account of the habit of our fallen nature to be inclined to inordinate sensible movements; which habit is called concupiscence. And thus the habit of impurity is born in the soul, even before the young man knows what impurity is, or recognizes it as a moral evil. At this most initial stage, nearly all men who fall into

such an error are involved in invincible ignorance, and thus are not subjectively guilty of the error or their sins of impurity. This is a crucial stage where the formation of the youth *requires* the preaching, in a very modest manner, of what is essential to chastity, so as to remove this ignorance and *to suscitare* in the young man *a will and desire born of truth*, to mortify himself *in body and soul* against inordinate movements of his sense appetite.

I will pass this over, however, since this is not the topic at hand. I want to turn our attention, now to some other wrong solutions.

The second wrong solution, which can be concomitant with the first one; says that, *I am not the cause of these 5 kinds of corporal sensations, and therefore I am not culpable for them*. This wrong solution is founded on the ignorance of the natural law, regarding what constitutes consent and responsibility. If one compares the notion of responsibility applicable to merely external things, one can very easily fall into thinking that what I do not cause, I cannot be guilty of or responsible for. This error might be ex-

acerbated by the fact that the young man eats too much or too richly, and has no habit of fasting or of corporal self-discipline: because when there is a surplus of nutrition, every man's body is more capable of experiencing these 5 kinds of corporeal sensation.

The third wrong solution goes further and says: *I am not able to resist, or must yield and consent to experiencing these sensations.* This error arises more principally from the ignorance the young man has of the practice of interior mortification; and without a habit of prayer and the rudimentary knowledge of the spiritual life. It might also arise, because in all honesty the young man has never *sought to resist*, and is ignorant of the fact of how capable his will is, naturally speaking, to resist. It might also arise from a certain depression the young man may fall into from other causes, which depression inclines him not to resist, so as *to make up for or accommodate* the sadness associated with *that* depression.

The fourth wrong solution is occasioned by the attribution of the whole causality for any one or more of these sensations to some exterior object, which the

young man perceives is their cause or occasion. If these sensations come to him, for example, when he sees a pretty girl, he will naturally and rightly interpret them as a natural response to her beauty, and never really reflect on the experience. If they come during the experience of other things, he might wrongly interpret this simultaneity as signifying that these other things are the natural cause of such movements, rather than merely occasional causes.

However, to attribute the whole causality of these movements to an exterior object, would be wrong, because many movements of the sense appetite are consequent to movements of the will or intellect or can be commanded at will.

A grown man, with much experience, knows, however, that even some of the most insignificant sensations, such as result from bowel movements or eating too much, or sitting in a too comfortable seat, at home or in a car, can occasion some of these sensations; and that this *has nothing to do* with the proper natural order of these sensations to human procreation, but rather is the result of the incapacity of the sense ap-

petite to distinguish the nature of causes: for the sense appetite only knows what pertains to sense and the sensible: thus any similarity in the sensation to what is properly natural for such movements, is perceived by the sense appetite as equivalent or equipollent, and thus can occasion any one or more of these 5 kinds of sensation in the body of the man.

But, just as the same beautiful woman, might cause and not cause any one or more of these 5 sensations in different men; so we must admit that objectively, the beauty of the woman is not their whole cause; for if it was, all men would experience the same sensation upon seeing the same woman; which is, patently, not the case.

Here is where the important distinction of “interior sensations” comes into play. Some men may prefer blonds, as they say, and others brunettes; such that some men take more pleasure in seeing a woman with one color hair than another. But, objectively speaking, the color of the woman’s hair *cannot* of itself necessarily cause his reaction or sense of pleasure, even if to many men it seems otherwise.

Hence one must admit, that within every man, there is some *rule* or standard of *perception* of what is beautiful, and when this particular man senses a woman, who conforms more closely to this rule or standard of beauty, this particular man experiences more delight in his act of interior sensation, and that this is the cause of the greater experience of pleasure when the woman is sensed by this man.

The fifth wrong solution is really the concatenation of the first 4 errors, into a woeful habit of impurity, which makes the young man a slave to lust; such that he feels himself compelled to consent to impurity, when he thinks, remembers, reminisces, imagines, feels, or is in the presence of certain external stimuli, which cause these 5 sensations in the body. This error arises principally from the nature of venereal sensation, which is accompanied in the body by the release of a number of neurological chemicals which fix the memory to what is perceived at the moment of consent, and channel sense experience into those parts of the brain where it is recognized as pleasurable. Thus

the more the acts of consent to venereal pleasure, the more intense the dependency of external sensation to internal sensation and consent.

THE INTERIOR RULE OF MANHOOD

An man can be said to pass from this initial stage of manhood, when there comes to be formed within him this interior rule in perception of corporeal beauty, which in a certain sense moves him to react to the beauty of a girl or woman, with an interior sensation or complacency, which of itself can be morally evil or morally neutral. The act of complacency is at the rule of the will; the movement towards pleasure immediately prior to this, is an act of the sensible appetite, and is not morally *evil*; but it can be naturally *inordinate*, that is excessive or not occasioned by what is proper and decent.

The act of consenting to pleasure is morally evil, when it consists in the consent to venereal pleasure or to the initiation or consummation of an act of procreation outside of the context of the Sacrament of

Matrimony and apart from the woman who is actually at present the wife of the man, or in a manner contrary to nature or some other virtue. The act of consent is not morally evil, if it does not consist in consent to venereal pleasure, but stops at a level of pleasure which is generically different and much less intense, wherein the man merely recognizes the beauty of the woman's corporal form, but does not desire her.

However, the sense appetite is capable of reflex actions, which are spontaneous, and hence a man can experience any one or more of those five corporeal sensations with an act of interior sensation, merely upon seeing a beautiful woman; though the frequency of such sensations depends mostly on levels of nutrition, and the lack of mortification of the eyes and interior sense appetite, in the man. I will, for brevity sake, omit a treatment of the specification of when such movements are sinful or not, for this is something of which you should take counsel with a holy confessor or spiritual director, who accepts the received tradition in moral theology, if you would have questions about it.

This interior rule, by which a man responds to a woman's beauty, however is not something in the intellect, nor in the memory, nor in the will, nor in the imagination; though all these faculties and powers can form this rule, modify it or alter it.

It cannot be in these powers or faculties of the soul, since the spontaneity of a man's reaction is prior to free will and the powers of the soul which can only be directed by such. Rather, this spontaneity is founded upon the interior rule for perception, and hence is a habilitating habit or habitual ability of the sense appetite to response to sense perception. It is *not*, as many modern psychologists might say, *in the subconscious*, because properly speaking the sensible part of man, though subordinate according to nature to his rational part, is not incapable of knowing (in Latin: *conoscere*) in its own manner of knowing, that is according to sense and sensation of what is sensible. But it is "subconscious" in the sense that one might not understand it or recognize it with his intellect, simply because he has never reflected upon its existence or nature.

The formal reason or cause of the *existence* of this interior rule, is that the man, must, to fulfill the duty given him by His Creator, be inclined to some specific female individual, so as to be motivated on the physical level to enter into marriage with her, marry her, and generate children by her; otherwise man, as a creature, would be defective. Hence every man must have a natural ability or habit which inclines his sense appetite to a specific class of women.

The formal reason or cause of *the form* of this interior rule, however, is not something necessary, strictly speaking; because it is obvious that some men never experience pleasure in women, or experience too much pleasure in things which are only associated with women; and this can be the cause of great deviations in the moral life, *since this interior rule is part of what is necessary to the right comportment of a man as a man.*

Some of the reasons for these deviations are the malformation of this interior rule. And this is what needs to be discussed next, since we live in an age in which there are so many deviations.

DEVIATIONS OR MALFORMATIONS OF THE INTERIOR RULE OF THE SENSE AP- PETITE

The first great deviation is a deviation by distortion; which is a certain sort of enslavement of the sense appetite to something which is only part of a woman's body. This kind of malformation results in what is called a "fetish", that is, a seemingly non-voluntary inclination to take pleasure upon seeing certain parts of the body of a woman, which are not properly associated with human "love", understanding "love" in the moral, not physical sense. Obviously, since this deviation does not incline a man to human reproduction *per se*, and does incline him to acts of impurity outside of God's law, a fetish is always a serious thing, which must be zealously guarded against by the man himself, if he wishes to secure his salvation and avoid greater moral deviations.

The second great deviation is the malformation of the interior rule, such that a man is inclined to find

pleasure in an act of interior sensation which has as its object what is not a woman or a part of the woman's body, but does regard a woman in some manner; this deviation is properly a perversion, and some kinds of such deviations, like the first kind of deviation, are also called fetishes: some of these regard women's clothing, the sign of the presence of such a deformation is the fact that a man is tempted to impurity, merely by looking upon a piece of woman's clothing.

The third great deviation is a deviation by deficiency: which arises from the not yet proper formation of the interior rule, whereby a man judges as beautiful and worthy of taking pleasure in, some general corporeal form of a woman. He still takes such pleasure, but it is with difficulty, a difficulty which is not associated with a problem with the man's body, but with a diminished lack of appreciation for the female form in his sense appetite.

It will be useful to reflect, for a moment, on why these 3 kinds of deviation result, to understand better the causes which form the interior rule of perception.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THIS INTERIOR RULE?

According to Aristotle, pleasure is the finding of agreeableness in an object known or sensed, for pleasure arises when two things convene together in a fitting manner, one of which is a being capable of sense.

Accordingly, what is agreeable is judged, in some manner, as being in conformity to the standard whereby it is judged. This standard of judgment in regard to what we are speaking of is this interior rule of perception. And hence this rule must be a standard by which the man judges what is agreeable to himself *as a man*, since this interior rule regards those perceptions which are agreeable to him as a man.

Consequently, this interior rule must presuppose a more fundamental vision which the man has of himself *as a man*, precisely because you cannot measure what is agreeable between an object known and the self, without first having a clear image of what that self is.

This more profound image of the self, is the formal negative cause of the interior rule whereby a man judges whether a woman is beautiful in his eyes. A formal negative cause is a complementary cause, like the signet ring, which when impressed in wax, leaves the positive image of the imaged etched in the negative in the signet ring. A formal negative cause indicates its complement by means of expressing what is contrary to its complement.

And hence this interior rule, defined now in respect of his self image, is a rule by which the man judges what is complementary to his interior self image of himself as a man; *such that when he finds a woman who according to this interior rule would complete himself, by a juxtaposition of complementarity with his image of himself, he finds her beautiful, agreeable to himself, and is capable of taking pleasure in the act of perceiving her.*

Obviously, this interior rule does not regard only the body of the woman, or should not, because the cause of this interior rule is the image the man should have of himself, as a man, which image should in-

clude more than just having a male body — though, as I am sure many woman will lament, this is often just the case in many men, who have an immature attitude, that is a incompletely formed interior rule founded upon a correspondingly incompletely formed image of the self as a man.

A MAN'S IMAGE OF HIMSELF, AS A MAN

Here we have arrived at the most fundamental level in the entire process of sensation in the man, which regards his being a man. This image he has of himself, I repeat, is something which is distinct from the image of himself, as a man, which he has in his intellect. For all men with some use of the intellect, can recognize that they are men and know that they are men.

But men feel to be men, on the basis of their personal experiences and accomplishments, which are also heavily influenced by their personal relationships with their parents, especially their father, and their own personal history during the years of their youth,

in which they achieved or failed to achieve, what in their own mind constituted the proper achievements of a man as a man.

But not all men feel that they are men; some still feel like they did as boys, that is, with no particular formation of their sense appetite.

WHAT CAN RESULT FROM A DEFICIENCY OF THE IMAGE OF SELF, AS A MAN

The fourth kind of malformation of the interior rule — which is not so much a malformation, but a state of deficiency — arises from a deficiency in the man's image of himself.

Such a man *to some extent* lacks a proper image of himself *as a man* in his sense appetite. He knows that he is a man, in his mind, i. e. with his intellect, and recognizes himself as such; *but* his sense appetite is not inclined to spontaneously react to this truth, because the appetite itself lacks a habitual knowledge of the self as a man; which habitual knowledge is the image of the self, of which I have spoken.

This lack of the image of the self as a man is the formal cause of an interior rule which is not ordered properly. And this disorder arises from this simple truth, that *what is in the image of self produces in the interior rule a negative* of what the sense appetite regards as complementary to the image of the self. And this disordered interior rule disposes the sense appetite to spontaneous acts of pleasure when presented with what the sense appetite judges would complement the man, as a man. On account of not having an image of self, as a man, what this interior rule holds to complete him as a man, is now not the female form, but the male form.

And this is the formal cause for that disorder which is popularly known as “homosexuality,” but which is merely a deficiency in the habit of sense appetite, and not a sexual orientation in any proper or formal sense of the word “orientation.”

Such a man, in the presence of another man who meets the criteria of the image of a man, as a man, which his sense appetite judges would complement himself, experiences a movement of joy. The habitual

occasions of such movements often occasion a perversion of the faculty of the intellect, which judges wrongly, that such movements in his sense appetite come from his nature, and that he is determined by them, or incapable of being freed from them. The truth is, rather, that the occasion of such experiences, has nothing to do with his identity as a man, rather, they arise, as I have explained from a misidentification of self in the sense appetite.

Yet, when these movements of joy are strong enough, they often cause one or more of the 5 kinds of physical sensation and the pleasure associated with them, which are normally associated with the onset of manhood. And this is the occasional cause for many men, who suffer from this disorder, in judging wrongly that they have an orientation determined by nature to such associations; which false judgment often leads to the sin of despair (in seeing no hope for liberation from this vice) or to the sins of disbelief or of blasphemy (in saying that “God made me this way” or “the Church or Sacred Scripture, in condemning this vice, teaches something abhorrent to human nature”).

HOW A MAN CAN CURE HIMSELF OF DISORDERS IN THE INTERIOR RULE

Each or any of these 4 kinds of disorders can and ought to be cured, since they are positively inordinate or contrary to nature. As Catholics, men have a grave obligation to set their whole soul aright, according to the natural and moral law, since *He who has saved us* in the supernatural order, by Grace and His Passion and Death and Resurrection, *is the same God who has created us* according to our nature and natural endowments. What we have, as male human beings, is His gift to us as Creator; and our salvation depends upon using this gift well and rightly, just as we ought to do with all His supernatural gifts to us.

That a man can alter and change this interior rule of perception is a truth of nature, since this interior rule is in the sense appetite, which is part of the sensible portion of the soul; and since all the faculties of the soul are subject to the command of the will, by acts of the will, the sense appetite can be reformed;

though in most men a recourse to grace will be absolutely necessary to strengthen the will, enlighten the mind, and make supple the sense appetite, prior to the reformation of this interior rule.

All this is true because both the image of self and the rule of perception are sensible habits in the sensible part of the soul, the former a sensible memory, the latter a sensible disposition which expresses the negative of that sensible memory. And thus the image of self is in an immediate formal composition with this interior rule of perception, such that with the image of self altered, the rule is immediately, formally and necessarily altered.

Hence, on account of this truth of nature, there are several methods which can be employed effectively to reorder the interior rule.

First of all, a man needs to develop in himself a habit of interior mortification, whereby he resists or “pushes back” with a sense of disgust or revulsion *every disordered movement in his sense appetite* — not only those regarding venereal pleasure — and by changing his manner of comportment, whereby he

avoids the occasions of those sensations which cause disordered movements. For this he needs to change his life and seek *grace and virtue* in prayer and sacrament; recognize his own moral failings and repent of these, and meditate upon the truth of himself and of what he has made of himself, in his habitual comportment.

Second, he needs to go to the root of the problem in the sense appetite, which occasions habitually such movements, by employing a habit of eating which is as parsimonious as the experience of such disordered movements is frequent; such that he fasts more and more profoundly, when such disordered movements are more frequent and more profound. Contrariwise, if he is a married man and lacks the frequency of ordered movements, he might have to eat more and more richly. Indeed, most men with any sort of habit of impurity, have a concomitant habit of gluttony, such that they eat much too much meat or animal proteins, take vitamins unnecessarily, and either much too frequently, and drink too much liquids.

Third, a man needs to go to a further, deeper level,

and seek to undo any disorder in his own interior rule, *by developing in himself a proper image of the self as a man*, in his *sense appetite*. This can be done chiefly by the coordinated use of intellect and will, in (i) repulsing with the emotion of disgust, all movements of joy or sadness in the sense appetite which are founded upon a diminished or disordered image of self as a man; and (ii) by welcoming with the emotion of joy and natural sense of honor those movements of the sense appetite which properly regard the image a man should have of himself, as a man.

Part of the difficulty in such a work of reordering the sense appetite, is that the deficiency of a proper image of self as a man, is often associated with a very subtle sadness or depression, which engenders irrational fears, which may or may not be consciously recognized as such. For such inordinate sadness is *not* founded *principally* upon the lack of resisting such movements of sadness in the sense appetite, but rather upon *the habit of consenting to falsehoods* regarding oneself, which either depress and belittle the self, *as a man*, and/or excessively exalt the self *in only*

a partial manner, such that even in such movements, one feels unfulfilled as a man, precisely because ‘being a man only partially’ can never satisfy the sense appetite of a man in the natural order of things.

Thus a Christian man ought to despise what carnal and perverse men apprise as constituting the proper self image of a man as a man. For this reason, Scripture teaches that *what is highly prized by men, is abhorrent to God*.

A Catholic man ought to imitate His God in this judgment, and thus abhor and abominate what carnal and perverse men apprise, and not judge himself as failing to meet their wrong standard of what it means to be a man.

Fourth, he needs to seek to cure *at the root* that image of self, by seeking, under the guidance of a good will and intellect well formed in the truth, *experiences whereby* in his sense appetite *his image of self, as a man, is reformed aright*; by engaging in actions and activities which confirm his personal sense and feeling of accomplishment and of achievement as man, in a virtuous manner, and according to the

duties of his state.

Thus, if he lacks a proper self image of himself as a man, because of having a lack of self confidence, he needs to uproot this lack of self confidence by seeking its causes and resolving his own inner doubts, and then by responding with the confidence that he is just as capable as any other man, as a man, of doing the things men do, as men; doing with that confidence, what a man should, can, and ought to do.

For some men this might be a simple as becoming more active and athletic, for others the habit of mortifying oneself interiorly, will result in that peace and frame of mind, whereby confidence with others, as a man, is born. Indeed, the more the sense appetite is mortified against disordered movements, the more it will naturally re-align itself to the proper order.

In these manners, the man acquires a habit of self assurance in his image of self as a man, and this in turn well orders his interior rule and sense appetite.

A FINAL WORD FOR MEN WHO LACK THE IMAGE OF THE SELF AS A MAN

Most commonly, those Catholics working in clinical psychology, who accept Church teaching and that vision of human nature, which is contained in Divine Revelation, are finding that this lack of image of self as a man, is consequent to an improper or deficient relationship of the man, as a youth, with his own father.

This is because it is our father from whom we learn to be a man.

If a family, for example, is run by the mother, the boys of the family rarely acquire the proper self image of themselves as a man, since the father ought to be, by God's ordinance, the head of the family, and he should rule and govern it.

In societies and families, where this is not the case, there is a much higher frequency of malformation of the self image, among men and women.

This also the case in families where there is no father, present to raise his sons.

Also, if the relationship the man had as a youth, with his father, was one where he was not affirmed in his self image as a man, he will lack a habit of self confidence as a man, in his sense appetite, and thus might develop an interior rule which contains an image of what he should be as a man.

Men who are afflicted with such a deficiency, therefore, need to reevaluate and apprise their relationship with their father, and seek to repair it, by virtuous acts of forgiveness, compassion, and understanding. They also need to break out of the false gospel of self, in which they have lived by their making or failure to act; they can collaborate with Christ in this self-liberation by engaging in activities proper to men and leaving aside activities which are proper to boys, girls or women.

Fathers, for their own part, in such cases, need to repair their relationship with their son, and by treating him as a man, with confidence and assurance, accept him as a man, not as an inferior or unworthy example of a man. A father acts very wrongly, therefore, if he loves his son as he would love a daughter. He also

acts badly if he always faults the son, and never praises him for his achievements, however so modest. Finally, he acts badly, if he does not become a good example and teacher of his son, as a man; and habitually recognize and familiarize with his son, as a man, taking him into his own society as a man, and doing with him things which men do, which he would never do with wife or daughter; teaching his son thus, that he is a man, and has achieved the status of a man, in his father's eyes.

For those men who fathers are already deceased, this process of healing will have to be in the memories, and in the manner in which one reacts to memories of failure and achievement, of alienation and acceptance; that is in belittling the failures which have been exaggerated in the memory and emotions; and reappraising one's achievements in the past as much better than one had thought. For momentary failures are just that, momentary: they ought not be allowed to erase or dominate memories of constant progress and achievement throughout one's entire youth or life.

For all these reasons, there is no better prayer for

such men than the frequent devout recitation of the *Our Father*, accompanied by the devout reception of the Sacrament of Penance. Let such men act with great faith and confidence *in the truth* that God has already given them, *in creating them*, the means necessary to break free from this slavery. Let them likewise recognize the truth of their personal history and renounce their own personal failures to act virtuously, to sin, and to consent to vice.

Finally, let them cultivate a lively devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so as to obtain from Her the grace to properly form habits of soul and body with the virtues of the natural and supernatural order.

Recommended reading:

http://www.tanbooks.com/doct/church_sodomy.htm