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St. Scholastica's Priory

Manila

Dear Sisters,

The Gospel and the first reading of the first Sunday in December, which is the second Sunday in Advent is about St. John the Baptist—the prophet who prepared the way of the Lord. The first reading alluded to him as the “voice of one crying in the wilderness”. That is what John the Baptist was. He lived at a time when the people were waiting for the Messiah. He bore witness to this long-awaited one but was met with disbelief. Not only that he was brought to prison for standing by the truth and courageous denunciation of what is wrong. Finally he was beheaded on the whim of a vindictive woman and reckless and stupid promise of a King blinded by lust.

Modern day prophets follow the way and the fate of John the Baptist. They too are in their own time and mission “a voice crying in the wilderness.” The latest is, of course Fr. Tentorio who gave up his life for the cause of the indigenous people and the environment. There are the whistle blowers who have denounced the corruption in our society, refusing millions and suffering threats to their life and of their families, the disruption of their normal lives, facing harassment cases and worst of all wondering whether all these sacrifices are in vain since no one of those they have denounced have been punished.

During this season of advent let us pray for justice to prevail in our country to break the culture of impunity and to vindicate the modern John the Baptist.

Sincerely yours,



Sister Mary John Mananzan, OSB

# STATIO CONFERENCE

## CHASTITY

By: Sister. Mary Paul Baul, OSB

### INTRODUCTION

On this statio Sunday we will reflect on the last of the twelve fruits of the Spirit that is formed in us - CHASTITY.

### What is chastity?

Chastity is defined as the sexual behavior of a man or woman acceptable to the moral standards and guidelines of a culture, civilization, or religion. The words “chaste” and “chastity” stem from the Latin adjective **castus** meaning “**pure.**” **Chaste** meant “**virtuous or pure from unlawful sexual intercourse**” (referring to extramarital sex) while **chastity** meant “**virginity.**” (*wikipedia.org.*)

In Catholic morality **chastity** is placed opposite the deadliest sin of lust, and **is classified as one of the seven virtues.** (*wikipedia.org.*)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of chastity as successful integration of sexuality within the person. It involves the integrity of the person and the integrity of the gift. (2337) Chastity as virtue comes under the cardinal virtue of temperance, which seeks to permeate the passions and appetites of the senses with reason. (2341) It blossoms in friendship expressed notably with one’s neighbor. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion. (2347) Chastity demands that people should cultivate chastity in the way that is suited to their state of life. Some profess virginity or consecrated celibacy which enables them to give themselves to God alone with an undivided heart in a remarkable manner. Others live in the way prescribed for all by the moral law, whether they are married or single. Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; other practice chastity in continence. There are three forms of the virtue of chastity: the first is the spouses, the second that of widows and the third that of virgins. We do not praise any of them to the exclusion of the others...This is what makes for the richness of the discipline of the Church. (2309)

### CONCEPT OF CHASTITY

Ronald Rolheiser in his book “The Holy Longing” speaks about the concept of chastity. That chastity is not the same thing as celibacy. To be chaste does not mean that one does not have sex like married couple called to live conjugal chastity. Nor does it mean that one is not modest. Married couples who are faithful to their vowed life are considered chaste. Chastity has to do with all experiencing. It is about the appropriateness of any experience. It is reverence. To be chaste is to experience people, things, places, entertainment, the phases of our lives, and sex in a way that does not violate them or ourselves. We are chaste when we relate to others in a way

that does not transgress their moral, psychological, emotional, aesthetic, and sexual boundaries. Chastity is respect, reverence, and patience. Its fruits are integration, gratitude, and joy. Lack of chastity is impatience, irreverence, and violation. Its fruits are disintegration of soul, bitterness, and cynicism.

## THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY

As mentioned above, chastity is one of the seven virtues. Fr. Venancio Calputura, SJ in his conference on the vows gives us a background of chastity.

In biblical perspective, chastity in the Old Testament was not a value. In fact, barrenness was considered a malady. The reason for this is that in the O.T. God promised a Messiah to the people of Israel. He was to be borne of a woman. The only way that the Messiah could come, therefore, is through a woman who is capable of bearing a child. Likewise in the New Testament, chastity too was not a value for the Jewish people in the New Testament. Even Mary, who was destined to be the mother of Jesus, intended to get married to Joseph. In fact, celibacy is still not a value to the Jews today who still await the coming of the Messiah. It was only St. Paul who said that “it is better for those who are not married not to get married anymore” but he said this only because he envisioned that the world would soon end.

Speaking of Filipino culture, one of the basic values of our own culture is fecundity. In fact, there is no direct translation of “chastity” in the Filipino language. The term used could either be “pag-ibig sa kapwa” which is better translated as “charity” or “kalinisan” which would more rightly mean cleanliness.

The basic argument for the value of celibacy is perhaps Paul’s exhortation; i.e. “to be eunuchs for the kingdom.” Religious would say, “I want to be a celibate because I want to serve God totally.” Being 100% celibate, however, does not guarantee a good religious. We would be very pure but have no enthusiasm at all for the kingdom. In religious life, the question is no longer “are you celibate or not” or “how do you live your celibacy” but “**how much have you loved people?**” Fr. Calputura challenged his hearers that if we cannot love or deal with people, one could not be celibate. The basic areas that we have to look are friendship and love. Friendship teaches us how to love. As religious we should be professional lovers. This is chastity!

Celibacy is essential and intrinsic to religious life. No one can live a life without meaning – a life of absurdity. Each one has to search for herself and for her own meaning of celibacy. What is meaningful for one may not be meaningful for the others. It is only ourselves who can give meaning to our “celibacy.”

## OBSTACLES TO CHASTITY

In our society today chastity can be so hard to live because it touches so many aspects of peoples’ identity. Saffioti mentioned some hindrances to chaste life such as: excessive

attachments to work, alcohol, food, money, things, sex, power, status, role and favorite prejudices; failure to grieve the losses involved in the choice of celibate chastity; failure to place the relationships with Jesus at the center of your life and to nurture that care; failure to remind oneself of the joys of chastity at the different stages of life; failure to know and understand one self deeply, in an integrated way; lack of healthy asceticism and contemplative spaces in daily life; lack of healthy friendships sustained in time with a diversity of people: men, women, younger, older, religious, married, single; These are all deterrent to chastity. As Macnamara says, “If love of God is the one big passion, then that orders all the little passions.”

## **BASIS FOR HEALTHY CHASTITY**

Experience reveals that chastity is a complex virtue. Yet it is a way that leads to life. (Prol. 20) Chastity is a quality or virtue that results from the interaction of self-restraint, truthfulness, and emerging freedom.

Michael Casey in his book *Strangers to the City* says that chastity will be realistic in the lives of the monks and nuns when it is characterized by the following qualities:

- A discerning Sense of Responsibility. A good conscience is marked by a high degree of discernment.
- Ownership of weakness. St. Aelred views this as “Everyone who desires to be freed from the domination of fleshly passions should exert themselves with great zeal and labor to acquire or preserve humility... Whoever loses humility is not able to keep chastity of the flesh... because when the soul is polluted, the flesh is also polluted by sexual sin.”
- Acceptance of discipline. Chastity is impossible without some bodily observances. This means that we use indicate that we are aware of the need for vigilance, the ability to refrain from or refuse the satisfaction of bodily appetites.
- Community – A good monastic community does more to sustain chastity than provide us with rules and regulations to prevent the opposite. It is a place of acceptance, affirmation, support, friendship, and even some degree of intimacy. It is not meager with its celebration of gifts and its admiration of persons. It provides for all appropriate outlets for generativity. Not a rigid impersonal system, nor an affective immature sentiment, but an atmosphere of solid adult mutuality, acceptance and love.
- Purity of heart. This involves investing all our energies in a single venture, not allowing ourselves to become fragmented and confused.
- Serenity. Trust in God is the only unfailing source of serenity
- Contemplation. Chastity is probably impossible without serious commitment to prayer, and serious commitment to prayer leads to sort of ordering of life which facilitates contemplation.
- Never lose hope in the mercy of God. St. Benedict bids his monks only to have faith and hope, and never to doubt the generosity or large-heartedness of God.

## CHALLENGE TO CHASTITY

In an Augustinian Formators Course on Chastity and Community, the resource speaker Luisa Saffioti challenged her audience with two important questions:

1. To what extent can formandi embrace and grow into a healthy living out of chastity without models of what this looks like?
2. Are there good models of healthy chastity for them to see in community?

Mother Gertrud Link, OSB in her reflection of “Living the Vows” wrote, *”It is in fact – I could mention names from my earliest convent days – that members of novitiate and also young sisters are often more deeply impressed by what they see in the life of a fellow sister, her faithfulness and unselfishness. Yes, they receive deeper impressions through these examples than by words and explanations. The old proverb: words teach but examples carry along, is in our days perhaps more true than ever before, because today’s young people look for authenticity. They can forgive us when they see that we have human weaknesses which we, obviously, struggle to overcome. But they cannot stand big, empty words. They cannot forgive when there is disparity between our words and our lives.”*

## CHASTITY IS A GIFT

In religious life, our chastity lived in celibacy is for the sake of the kingdom. The Old Testament does not suggest chastity. Not until Jesus gave the example of a celibate life as a valid Christian option for those to whom it was given, did chastity in celibacy come to have a positive value says, S. Mary Linscott, SNDN. In some ways celibate chastity is specially connected with Jesus and with closeness relation to him. He himself lived it in overwhelming love of the Father; in this rich affectivity; in the universality of his love which reached out to all yet which met each where he or she was and refused none. Those closest to him in his incarnation loved in this way and touched by him followed him in celibate love, as Mary and Joseph did. The apostles from the time they gave themselves to Jesus seem to have lived like this. And we know from the history of the early church that from the first centuries there were those who were unmarriageable for the sake of the kingdom. As St. Paul said” it is better for those who are not married not to get married anymore.” He said this only because he envisioned that the world would soon end.

Jesus made it clear that chastity in celibacy is a gift. Like all God’s gifts it is unmerited and freely given. Moreover, it is offered to some but not to all. “Let those who can take it, take it,” he said (Matthew 19:12). He spoke of it in the strong and striking terms of the renunciation involved. But neither for himself nor for those who followed him in this way was chastity in celibacy a negative thing. All God’s gifts are positive and for the sake of the Kingdom.

## CONCLUSION

Fidelity to chastity in our celibate life is truly a ministry. It is a witness, in the first place to the bountiful love of God. A love that is not self-centered but all pervading. And because it is given to all it is a witness to God. It is like the love of the saints and martyrs whose death was a witness of love. Our fidelity to our vow of chastity is a similar witness, a proclamation of the gospel values of Christ.

Consecrated celibacy is a gift from God. It is for living, for loving. It has everything to do with interpersonal relationships: with God, with people and all creation. As Brian O’Leary says, “friendship in celibate living has to do with love received and love given, with life lived to the full through caring and being cared for, through reaching out and being reached out too, through commitment to people and having people committed to us.” Our relationships with God and with people are closely intertwined. Our experienced of being loved and loving God is somehow dependent on our experience of being loved by people and loving people. So much so that St. Benedict in his rule never loses sight of the primacy of love. The Rule can almost be called a handbook on the practice of loving. That living out of love in its most practical terms, which we struggle with every day, hinges on our love of Christ, the keystone of it all.

### Reflection Questions:

1. The need for right relationship in community is very crucial to our development of chaste and celibate loving. What has been your experience of friendship in community? Have you felt empowered in your experience of intimacy and have you empowered others? Do you experience friendship as a positive element in community interrelations?
2. Chastity requires discipline and freedom. It is a virtue that promotes a good and healthy life. How do we witness chastity to our lay partners, family and friends?
3. Saffiotti in her article “Affectivity and Formation for Religious Life” poses two important questions we need to ask ourselves as vowed celibate:  
Why do I stay in religious life?  
What keeps me here?

One needs to be able to answer these questions in order to live out and embrace one’s chaste celibate commitment in healthy and life-giving way. It is interesting to see whether the answers you give are relational ones.

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## **WHAT IS A BENEDICTINE OBLATE? WHO? HOW?**

**By: Maureen Gonzalez Tanseco**

These are top 3 questions I encounter each time one hears the word OBLATE.

A Benedictine oblate is a lay person, male/ female, who is affiliated with the Benedictine monks, priests, nuns worldwide. Benedictine oblates are their extension to the outside world; their branches as to a tree reaching out to all parts of the world, branches giving shade to both rich and poor who are in need of spiritual, moral, psychological, financial help or any of the like. Oblates live the Benedictine way of life.

What is the Benedictine way of life?

Benedictine way of life or Benedictine spirituality is much understood in our RB or the Rule of St. Benedict. It is a small book consisting of a beautiful prologue and 73 chapters which our founder St. Benedict inspiringly made while in quietude with the Lord. It starts off with "LISTEN" and ends with "THE RULE ONLY A BEGINNING OF PERFECTION". This book is used by all Benedictine orders and other orders as well because it is very adoptable to one's life especially that who wishes to be in active union with God. This book speaks much about silence amidst wordly noise; silence so as to listen to the voice of God as we roam in this world and as noise roams in the people's lives. It also speaks much about charity. So we Benedictine oblates, whatever state of life we are in, do charity most fit for us as individuals and most fit for our families. The Benedictine Sisters always remind us that our families are our number one apostolate. In this way we don't neglect our duties as parents or as children. We uphold family life. St. Benedict in his RULE also stresses discipline. Thus, we oblates take disciplinary actions too even to our own selves in our daily chores and in our prayer life.

As stated earlier oblates put up projects most suitable in their way of life. Some are busy with block rosary, mass preparations in their barangay, children's choir, rosary- making and crafts- making, Bible group, the sick, lost handicapped, feeding. To unite the group we have one common apostolate. Here in Baguio we have at present the feeding program. Pretty soon we can extend to the handicapped or even women's education on hygiene and simple ways of livelihood.

Oblates have monthly meetings under the guidance of a Benedictine Sister. The Sister in charge imbues in us our holy father St. Benedict's spirituality by explaining to us one RULE at a time and how we can apply it at the present times. We are also taught LECTIO DIVINA and practice it allowing us to commune with God by emptying ourselves even for just a quarter of an hour. In our monthly gatherings we get to know much about every oblate and become closer to one another. We bring food which is a delight to the whole group. We eat, laugh, share, and also a very good chance of more ideas on how to grow come in.

Oblates also join the Sisters in their evening prayer called vespers. In one voice we adore the Triune God and also lift up our cry for the urgent needs of the world. Those who can join the lauds, the Sisters' early morning prayer, are most welcome. I, for one, find these community prayers very angelic. As a young girl, I would listen, with so much delight in my heart, to the Dominican Sisters of my school singing in the chapel which for me sounded like a choir of angels.

We join the Sisters celebrate feasts of St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, the holy twins, our foundation, and Christmasses. We eat, sing, dance. What a simple, festive way of celebrating memorable days!

To add color to our life as an oblate we have recollections/ retreats on Lent and Advent. Usually we do these in our own native place/ province though it is also offered in Tagaytay along with oblates of other places. To make oblates' life even more colorful, we have national convention every 3 years. The first one was in Iba, Zambales, the second was in Digos, Davao, and the third was in Tagaytay. National convention is a great opportunity for all oblates to meet one another from all sectors of the country both the Eucharistic King oblates and Tutzing oblates. The lectures and sharings of our speakers are spiritually inspirational and educational too. How I wish we could have it yearly! To top it all, we have BENEDICTINE OBLATES' WORLD CONVENTION. I think the third one will be in 2013. How I'd like to join [ if St. Benedict grants me this privilege].

Now the HOW question. Easy. The person interested may simply sit in one of our monthly meetings. If he/she finds it soul gratifying, that person will surely come back. And she can apply as a candidate. After a year or more, she can ask to be accepted as a full oblate. The time usually allotted to every level is one year. But it all depends on the performance and interest of the person involved.

I, Maureen Gonzalez Tanseco, have been a full oblate since 1999. Prior to this, I was a candidate/ novice for 4 years. Being the first in St. Scholastica's Baguio and alone for 9 solid years I had the privilege of getting the best training and best attention from the Sisters because I had them alone to myself and vice versa. Of course my fellow oblates do get the best training too, otherwise, I myself would be declining by now. We in St. Scholastica's Convent get the best direction in life from our spiritual directors.

My husband before passing away had expressed to the Sisters many times, usually when I renewed my promises, his joy seeing me an oblate. He said it assures him that I will always be in very good hands and most of all, it assures him that I wouldn't be a wanderer in church, that I have a home with Jesus ... the St. Scholastica's Convent.

Being an oblate is my life. I am absolutely happy with my co-oblates nationwide, with the Sisters and their employees. They are my family. My Baguio group is fast growing in number and in spirituality. The miracles St. Benedict has done in my life is another book to make. I shall live my life bravely with head held high breathing the Benedictine spirituality till I see the glory of God in its fullest.

**Full text of Sister Joan Chittister's Closing Address at the NCEA,  
Friday, April 20, 2001.**

**“Leading the Way: To Go Where There Is No Road and Leave a Path”**

*Continuation...*

So the question for spiritual leaders in catholic schools today must become on what roads should we lead them now?

The answer to that question, I contend, has been clear for 2000 years. We must lead them down the roads of the one who said, “I am the way.”

Lead them down the road to Egypt where Joseph and Mary, refugees from the dictator hero, sought political asylum. Take them into a world where today's 14m refugees and 25 m displaced persons live in squalor and starvation, fear and destitution everywhere. Teach them to ask of a country created of immigrants why its borders are tight against them while countries far more poor, far more crowded, are far more open to them than we are.

While forests were coming down in behalf of western economic interests and farmlands were drying up under a punctured ozone layer, (3x grt us) global population increased from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 6 billion in 1999. Now those people are swarming across the borders of the world, following the garbage cans of the world looking for water, food and work.

Ask them as you map their way through history how it was that in 1942 this Christian country sent boatloads of Jews anchored on our shores back to European concentration camps – and sends boatload after boatload back to other bleak and barbaric places yet today. Ask them in the name of Jesus who is the way what that has to be with being Christian?

Lead them down the road to Galilee where Jesus walked day after day healing the sick, feeding the hungry, defending the poor.

Show them the 10m children on their own streets who wait without health insurance in the richest country in the world.

Help them to see the working poor, those 6m Americans who are working low paying jobs for part-time pay, or, worse, who work two jobs with no benefits, no compensation, no paid vacations, no day care services no pensions and less than full- time pay. Teach them to ask what they will do in their day to heal this?

Lead them up the road to Tabor to the mountaintop where Jesus appears to the apostles not with Nathan the priest or with David the king, the institution men of Israel, but with the prophets Moses and Elijah – with Moses, a liberator of peoples, and Elijah whom king Ahab called ‘that trouble-maker of Israel’.

Take them up the road to Tabor, indeed, and teach them to question aloud how it is that Jesus did not allow the apostles to stay there but led them instead straight back down to the bottom of the mountain, to the dirty towns and throngs of hurting peoples below who were waiting to be healed.

Teach them to ask, for instance, whether or not the fact that we have not sent healing medicine to the hordes of people with AIDS in Africa might not just be a new kind of racism...

Teach them to ask whether or not in our lust for capital punishment, the fact that we and China account for over half the executions in the world every year, and that we ourselves are the leading violators of international law against the execution of child offenders whether we might not just be becoming what we hate.

By all means, lead them – both to the top of Tabor – and to the bottom of Tabor, as well, where, now as then, the poor wait for the disciples of Jesus who claim to lead the way to cast out demons on their behalf.

Lead them down the road to Samaria to the place where Jesus the Jewish man spoke deep theology to a Samaritan woman announced to her first that He was the Messiah and then sent her to evangelize an entire city.

Lead them to where all the women of the world – wait today at wells gone dry for them to become visible, to have their questions heard, to have theirs answers listened to, to hear a word of theology that ennobles them, too, to be sent, as she was, to evangelize the cities where, as scripture says so clearly, “because of her thousands were converted that day.”

Teach them to ask why – in the light of Samaria – it can possibly be that women are forbidden to ask for the fullness of the spiritual life?

Teach them to ask how it is that one sex can take upon itself the right to define what god wants of the other one. Teach them to ask what kind of god it is that would give women a mind, a soul, a baptism and a call and then forbid them to answer it when a sacramental church is in danger of losing the sacraments.

Those who seek to silence the questions of women at dry wells yet today seek, whether they realize it or not, to silence, too, the Hail Mary, the Magnificat, the woman in the rich man’s house, Mary Magdalene at the tomb Jesus himself at this well and the feminine voice of god which said, “let us make them in our image. Male and female let us make them.”

Most of all, teach them not to despair. After all, the disciples who were with Jesus that day didn't want him talking to a woman either. "Send her away," they said. "She is following after us." But, scripture says, he did not.

Teach them, like Jesus, to silence the silencing.

Lead them down the road to Jerusalem, the center of the synagogue, the center of the state.

Lead them to scrutinize our own centers of power in a world where few of the privileged, the comfortable, or the powerful, cry out for those 30 million Americans without enough to eat, for those 3 million without shelter, for those whose schools are rotting, and for those millions everywhere whose breathing is threatened by smog and pollution while we roll-back clean air legislation and renege on global environmental treaties, and cut childcare funds for those whose lives are being eaten up by economic disparity by those who preach progress, progress, progress for themselves but put no faces on the bottom lines of their charts.

How is it that we can put half the budget of this country into wartime preparations in peacetime and plead that we don't have money enough in this country to meet human needs.

Indeed, the streets of our country run red with the blood of our own children. We have taught them violence well. But how we will ever be able to convince them, that our violence is good but their violence is bad while we develop weapon system after weapon system for the powerful to use against the desperate and unarmed and insist that gun control is a violation of our constitutional rights.

Remind them that it was on the road to Jerusalem that Jesus told the Pharisees "stop these ones from shouting and 'even the stones will cry out.'"

Teach them that crying out for the others is, in the end, what spiritual leadership is all about.

Finally, lead them down the road to Emmaus lead them to where community happens – as it did for the disciples on the road – in the 'breaking of the bread' – where no one is outcast and no one is without value and no one is excluded from the feast.

Spiritual leadership demands that in this world of power and profit, sexism and economic domination, we bring them to see what reality really is. We lead them to envision a better way, and we teach them to question the things that obstruct its coming.

We must show them in our own lives the kind of courageous persistence it takes to wrest the gospel from the caricature of old maps and bring it to new life in new ways that protects both the born and the unborn child, and that recognizes that abortion on demand is not just a woman's decision. It is the decision of everyone of us who allows one last sexist trick on women by those who will pay for abortions but not for the day care and food stamps and educational monies it would take to raise the children that are conceived.

We must lead them to speak for all the nobodies that nobody wants to be, so that the poor do not have to add groveling to poverty in the next generation.

We must call them to give human dignity to the gay and lesbian community, so that no more beautiful people die cruciform on barbed-wire fences in the next generation because we tolerated hate in the name of religion in ours.

We must show them how to respect all the brown and black and yellow “others” – all the cripples and the lepers and the outcasts and the women – who swarm this time to us for acceptance, for community, for equality, for the safe, warm touch of the Christ whom we say lives in us.

The philosopher Chuan Tzu says, “How shall I talk of the sea to a frog that has never left its pond.” How can we expect of them what we fail to be ourselves?

What you are, you see, your students will be. What you have the courage to question. They will learn to question, too.

Spiritual leadership demands, in other words, that you yourself take them where there are no roads and leave a path.

We must teach them when we teach them the doctrine of ‘free will’ that the other side of free will is responsibility. That we are agents – not spectators, not victims. We must teach them, in other words, that time changes nothing, people do. And we must teach it with our lives.

You are what makes catholic education different. Pity the church that does not think and its teachers who are not thinkers themselves. Pity the children who are taught to recite the past but forbidden to examine the present or to imagine a different future. Pity the country left with the children who are forbidden to think by teachers who fail to show them how.

When I was a young catholic school teacher we suddenly realized that we had ghettoized ourselves to the point that we were teaching from “catholic” arithmetic books and “catholic” history books and “catholic” geography books and even “catholic spellers!” whatever in heaven’s name that was.

But I have come these years to think it would be a great new act of spiritual leadership – totally consonant with 100 years of papal encyclicals on social justice – if there were indeed a catholic arithmetic that concentrated not on the splitting of apple pies to teach fractions but on the distribution of the food of the world to others.

A catholic geography that taught who was taking whose resources and at what cost to them.

A catholic history that taught the sin against conscience of the authoritarian state.

A catholic science that taught the full humanity of women.

A catholic economics that taught the sinfulness of the ill-gotten gains of sweatshops.

And, oh yes, by the way a catholic speller that spelled “male” and “female” e-q-u-a-l in the languages of both state and church so that we had at our disposal for the building of the reign of God everywhere – in politics and international economics and law, in all the seminaries and synods and sacristies of the world, -- all the resources of the human race rather than simply half of them. Maybe, then, we would be doing twice as well as we are now.

We’ve come a long, long road since Hiroshima and Vatican II but without you it is only one short thought back to the dangers of the cold war and the intellectual boundaries of Vatican I. You are catholic school teachers. You are the shapers of the real future of both church and state. Decide which church, which state, you want and teach it, be it, lead it.

What is spiritual leadership? It is the commitment, the courage, the questions it will take to make the prophetic normative.

What is your curriculum? Ceaseless focus on real issues, and a vision for the gospel.

Where is your school? Everywhere.

What is your task? To honor the questions of those for whom old maps do not show the way and old answers do not persuade, to teach students that precisely when people do not want them to ask questions, that is exactly when they must.

Teach them that when we do not allow questions, we do both church and state irreparable harm. We deny the Holy Spirit; we turn the state into a gulag and the church into a cult. Worst of all, we make suspect the very quality of thought in the catholic school.

The task of the teacher, -- the Christian teacher, - must be to determine not what is the world that is politically convenient for us today but what is the world we are called to leave behind.

I’m begging you, if you really want to be spiritual leaders, leave behind a cold, clear sense of reality, leave behind a vision of the better, leave behind a memory of the unremitting courage to ask the hard, the necessary questions.

And whatever you do, do not give up. Persist. Have faith. And when your most sublime ideas meet the greatest resistance, remember that today’s heresy is tomorrow’s social dogma. So it was when Galileo questioned the nature of the universe. So it was when Luther asked for the publication of the scriptures in the vernacular, so it was when sojourner truth demanded the end to slavery, so it was when Elizabeth caddy Stanton went on a hunger strike for a woman’s right to vote, so it was when John Courtney Murray argued for freedom of conscience, so it was when MLK wanted to integrate busses! So it was when people wanted communion in the hand ...

Can you honestly say that those questions should not have been asked?!

Teach them to question, teach them to question – for all our sakes, teach them to think. The integrity of the church, the existence of the globe, and without doubt, “faith in the future” depends on your leading the way.