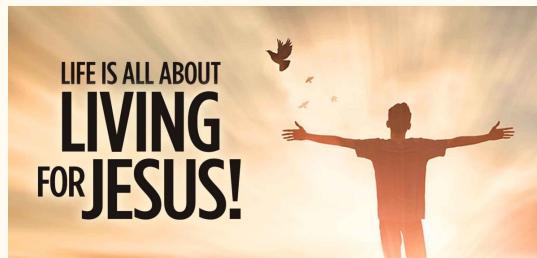


St. Henry Catholic Church

Speaking the Truth in Love

Fr. Andrie



1

Genesis 22

- **Genesis 22:13:** Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, when the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven to stop.
- Abraham looked and saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.



2

Genesis 22

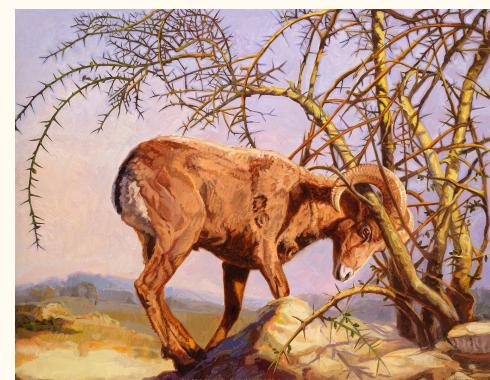
- Often, with our culture's broken perspective, our young people get caught in the thicket of social media, family, friends, entertainment, and/or school with ideas or lifestyles contrary to Christ.
- Caught by their horns in the thicket of lies, our young people are prevented from experiencing the fullness of Christ's life, mercy, and love.



3

Genesis 22

- They can also get caught in a thicket with controversial issues – sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, same sex marriage, contraception, in vitro fertilization, abortion, transgenderism, etc.
- These issues can cause our young people to get stuck, i.e., inhibiting their capacity to experience authentic freedom, peace, and love that Christ offers to them.



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Important Distinctions

Person	Inclination	Action
<p>Possesses inherent dignity with intellect (self-reflection) free will (self-determination), and the capacity to love and know God.</p> <p>Only creature that is made for its own sake, unrepeatable, and has a capacity for communion with God and others; potential for redemption by Christ.</p>	<p>While Baptism removes Original Sin, concupiscence or the tendency toward sin remains. As human beings, we have a natural tendency towards wrongdoing.</p> <p>Our disordered inclination to sin is not sin itself. Instead, it makes us vulnerable to sin. Sin occurs when we <i>consent</i> to sin.</p>	<p>The deliberate choice made by the will, informed by the intellect, and thus the basis of morality.</p> <p>Acts of the will are properly “moral” because the person is master of their choice.</p>

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Truth in the Middle

Deficiency	Truth	Excess
<p>Cowardice</p> <p>Angry critiques condemning those with same-sex attraction to hell.</p>	<p>Virtue is the “Golden Mean” – a balanced mean between the extremes (deficiency and excess).</p> <p>Charity is unique, where the extreme of total self-giving, like martyrdom, is the highest good, not a vice.</p>	<p>Foolhardiness</p> <p>Celebrations of sexual expression contrary to God’s will in gay-pride parades</p>

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Overview

- Sex Outside of Marriage
- Homosexuality
- Same Sex Marriage
- Contraception
- In Vitro Fertilization
- Abortion
- Transgenderism
- Immigration

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Sex Outside of Marriage

- Sex is a sacred act. It has a body language, i.e., the total gift of self or mutual self-giving of persons. The two-fold purposes of the sex are **unity** (mutual self-giving of spouses) and **procreation** (openness to life as potential co-creators with God).
- When done in truth, sex is a bodily expression and deepens marital vows. When done in truth, sex reflects the truth about God (an eternal Communion of Persons of self-giving) that deepens unity and sanctifies spouses.

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Sex Outside of Marriage

- When sexual union is done outside the covenant of marriage, it does not reflect the truth about the relationship, i.e., the total gift of self as no vows have been made. Sex outside of marriage is a dishonest act and therefore, against the dignity of those who engage in it.
- Sex outside of marriage is not “love,” but rather lust or using of each other for sexual pleasure, which again, is beneath the dignity of persons. Human beings are persons to be loved and never objects to be used. The body is not to be treated as a tool for pleasure, but rather a gift to be given fully.
- In short, sexual union must always be done *in truth*.

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Sex Outside of Marriage

Sacred Scripture

- **1 Corinthians 6:18:** Warns against sexual immorality (fornication).
- **Genesis 2:24:** "A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."
- **Hebrews 13:4:** "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

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Homosexuality

- Homosexual activity is contrary to the natural law. The natural law is our participation in God's eternal law, which is how God guides all creation to its proper purpose, ensuring universal harmony and reflecting divine truth and goodness.
- The natural law is the universal moral law inscribed on the human heart, accessible through reason, teaching us to "do good and avoid evil" and guiding us to the proper end. Human acts, including our sexual acts, have a created nature or purpose.
- Natural law theory views sex as intrinsically linked to its natural ends, primarily **procreation** and **unity of spouses** within marriage. Sex outside these purposes (like contraception or non-marital sex) are morally problematic because they frustrate God's original purpose for sex. When sex aligns with God's will, it promotes human flourishing.

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Homosexuality

Persons: Homosexual persons should be treated with respect, compassion, and sensitivity, avoiding unjust discrimination. It is always important to see the person in front of you.

Inclination: Homosexual orientation, while objectively disordered, is not inherently sinful as it is not chosen.

Homosexual acts: Considered "gravely sinful" and "intrinsically disordered" based on Sacred Scripture and the natural law as they do not lead to procreation or express complementarity between the sexes. Homosexual acts are acts against the design of the body and can never be approved.

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Homosexuality

- Sacred Scripture testifies to the sinfulness of homosexual activity: Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 & 20, 1 Corinthians 6, Romans 1, 1 Timothy 1
- **Key:** All persons, including those with homosexual tendencies, are called to live chaste lives, meaning abstinence from sexual activity.
- **Kid Language:** God designed sex for bonding and babies. When this is respected, we will be truly happy.

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Same Sex Marriage

- Based on Sacred Scripture, the Church's Tradition, and the natural law, the Catholic Church teaches that marriage is exclusively a lifelong union between one man and one woman, established by God for the procreation and education of children.
- God established sexual union within marriage to reflect the complementary nature of male and female and the "twofold end" of the good of the spouses (bonding) and the transmission of life (procreation), which cannot be separated.
- The Church holds that same-sex unions, while treated with respect and sensitivity, cannot fulfill these inherent purposes (procreation and unity), making them distinct from sacramental marriage.

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God's Plan for Marriage

Sacred Scripture

- **Genesis 2:24-25** describes the “one flesh” union as part of the God’s work of creation. When asked about divorce, Jesus reaffirmed God’s will from the beginning that marriage is between a man and a woman, which is a natural complementarity for union and procreation (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9).
- **Ephesians 5:21-33**: St. Paul describes how marriage is a sacrament, i.e., a sacred covenant that reflects Christ’s love for the Church. The sacred covenant of marriage requires a permanent, exclusive, and life-giving bond to accurately reflect the marital covenant of Christ and the Church.

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Contraception

The Church’s rejection of artificial contraception is based on the two inseparable “significances” or purposes of the sexual act:

- **The Unitive Aspect**: Sex is intended to express a total, mutual gift of self between a husband and wife. Contraception is seen as a “spiritual barrier” that prevents this total self-giving by withholding the gift of fertility (e.g., the power of becoming a father/mother).
- **The Procreative Aspect**: Sex is naturally ordered toward the generation of new life. By deliberately “frustrating” this potential, couples act against God’s design for creation.

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Contraception

- The Catholic Church teaches that artificial contraception is morally wrong because it separates the unitive (love-giving) and procreative (life-giving) purposes of marital sex, interfering with God's design for sexual intimacy.
- The Church's teaching on the immorality of contraception is reaffirmed in Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*, which forbids methods like condoms, pills, and sterilization. Only Natural Family Planning (NFP) is permissible for spacing children due to grave reasons.
- **Key:** Contraception is an "anti-sign" in that it distorts the complete self-giving love that God designed sex to express.

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in Vitro Fertilization

- The Catholic Church teaches that in vitro fertilization is morally wrong, viewing it as a grave evil because it separates procreation from the marital act, treats embryos as products, often leads to the destruction of embryonic life, and places conception under technology's control, contradicting the view that children are a gift from God.
- ***Dignitas Personae (2008)***: States IVF is "morally unacceptable" because it "dissociates the sexual act from the procreative act," making parents "delegates of a third party" (doctors/biologists).

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in Vitro Fertilization

- **Life as a Gift:** The Church emphasizes that children should be the fruit of the conjugal union, not manufactured or treated as disposable "biological material," highlighting the dignity of the embryo from conception. IVF "depersonalizes" the origin of a human being. Human beings are the fruit of love (living gifts from God), not the products of technology.
- **Contraception & IVF:** The Church opposes IVF for similar reasons it opposes contraception: it separates the unitive (loving) and procreative (life-giving) aspects of sex, as outlined in *Humanae Vitae* (1968).
- **Alternative to IVF:** The Church encourages adoption and other forms of service for infertile couples, viewing physical sterility as a cross to bear, not an absolute evil.

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in Vitro Fertilization

The Church does not view technology itself as wrong, provided it **assists** rather than **replaces** the marital act to achieve pregnancy. Permitted medical interventions include:

- **Restorative Reproductive Medicine:** Treatments that diagnose and heal the underlying causes of infertility, such as surgery for blocked tubes or hormonal treatments.
- **NaProTechnology:** A system designed to work with a woman's natural biological rhythms to restore fertility. More information is available via the Saint Paul VI Institute.
- **Natural Family Planning (NFP):** Methods to track fertility cycles to optimize the timing of natural intercourse.

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Abortion

- The Catholic Church teaches that **direct abortion is a grave moral wrong** because it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being, whose life is considered sacred from the moment of conception. This position is rooted in Sacred Scripture, natural law, and has been a consistent teaching of the Church since the first century.
- The Church views abortion as wrong based on the following reasons:
- **Sanctity of Human Life:** The Church holds that all human life is sacred and has inherent dignity from the moment of conception until natural death. Modern genetic science confirms that a unique, genetically distinct human organism begins to exist at fertilization, which the Church teaches must be treated as a person.

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Abortion

- **The Right to Life:** The right to life is considered the most fundamental human right, the foundation of all other rights. Because an unborn child is a human being, they possess this inviolable right, which society and law are bound to protect.
- **Divine Commandment:** The Church's teaching is based on the Fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill". Early Christian documents like the Didache and the Letter of Barnabas explicitly condemned abortion as early as the first and second centuries. God is the Lord of life and death. Life and death are the Lord's realm and not ours as creatures.

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Abortion

- **Innocence:** Abortion is considered the killing of an innocent human being, which can never be justified, regardless of circumstance. The Church makes no distinction based on the stage of development (e.g., "formed" or "unformed"), as it views the entire developmental process as the life of a human being with potential.
- **Forgiveness and Support:** While the Church calls abortion an "unspeakable crime" and a "grave moral disorder," it also emphasizes God's infinite mercy and the possibility of forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation for women who have had abortions. Organizations such as Rachel's Vineyard work to provide support and healing for women who have had abortions.

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Sexual Integrity

Category	Bonding (Unity)	Babies (Procreation)	Truth
Sex within Marriage	✓	✓	✓
Sex outside of marriage	✓	✓	✗
Homosexuality	✗	✗	✗
Contraception	✗	✗	✗
In Vitro Fertilization	✗	✓	✗
Abortion	✗	✗	✗

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Transgenderism

- The Catholic Church maintains that God created humans as two distinct complementarity sexes, male and female. The Church teaches that biological sex is immutable. Views that gender is socially constructed or can be changed are contrary to God's plan, a "tinkering" with creation.
- **Dignitas Infinita** (2024): This formal Vatican declaration labeled gender-affirming surgery and gender theory as "grave violations of human dignity." It argues that such interventions risk "making oneself God" by attempting to change the biological reality received at conception.

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Transgenderism

- **Body-Soul Unity**: Catholic teaching stresses that the human person is an integrated whole of body and soul, making biological sex a fundamental aspect of identity, not just anatomy. The unity of our unique body (male or female) and soul, is meant to be cherished (received as a gift) and understood in its fullness.
- **Healing, not affirmation of treatment**: Medical and spiritual support aims to help individuals accept their bodies and find healing for distress, not to affirm a gender identity different from their biological sex.

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Transgenderism

- **God-given identity:** The core message is that everyone is created male or female by God, and true wholeness comes from embracing this reality, even if it's difficult.
- **Intersex Conditions:** The Church distinguishes between elective gender-affirming surgeries and medical procedures to resolve "genital abnormalities" present at birth, which it permits.
- **Call to Love:** The Church stresses boundless love for God's people, and particularly those with gender dysphoria, condemning hatred and violence against transgender individuals.

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Immigration

- The Catholic Church views immigration through the lens of human dignity, recognizing the right to migrate for a better life while upholding a nation's right to secure borders, advocating for compassionate, lawful policies that support family unity and integrate newcomers, rooted in Scripture and tradition.
- U.S. Catholic agencies actively provide legal, humanitarian, and pastoral services to immigrants and refugees, emphasizing that serving the foreigner is a Gospel mandate to welcome Christ.

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Immigration

Core Teachings on Immigration

- **Dignity of the Person:** Every individual, made in God's image, deserves respect, dignity, and access to basic needs like food, water, and healthcare, regardless of immigration status.
- **Right to Migrate:** People have a right to seek a better life and support their families when conditions in their homeland are unsafe or unsustainable.
- **Duty to Welcome:** The Church teaches a moral obligation to welcome the stranger and treat immigrants with charity, mirroring Christ's call.

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Immigration

Core Teachings on Immigration

- **National Sovereignty:** Sovereign nations have a legitimate right to control borders and enact laws for the common good, but this must be balanced with humanitarian duties.
- **Family Unity:** Immigration policies should prioritize family unity, as families are foundational to society.
- Whereas it is abortion is a **negative moral norm** (always wrong to kill an innocent child), immigration is a **positive moral norm** (requiring prudence on how to best handle).

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Summary

- It is helpful to remember that Catholic morality is centered on Jesus Christ as the model for life, focusing on His teachings (like the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes) to achieve "abundant life" through love, grace, and virtue.
- Jesus Christ gives his disciples all the grace needed to transform them to live as He did, moving beyond mere rule-following to a deep, Christ-centered response to God's love.
- It is about becoming more like Christ by participating in His divine life, guided by Sacred Scripture, the Church's teaching, conscience, and strengthened by faith, hope, and charity. Christ's love is the origin and goal of the Church's teaching on controversial issues.