

Cast Your Cares upon the Lord: The Sacrament of Reconciliation and Single People

Many adults in our world today are single. Some of these have chosen to be single either for religious reasons (they wish to serve the Lord, the Church or their aging parents) or for secular reasons (their career and work makes marriage difficult). Others have not specifically chosen to be single, but find themselves so either because they have not yet found a spouse, or they are separated or divorced, or their spouses have died. Whatever the reasons or circumstances the Father loves those who are now living single lives. He wishes to bless their lives and to bring to their lives in a deep peace and joy.

The Temptations of the Single

The temptations that single men and women face are, for the most part, similar to those encountered by married men and women. Everyone, for example, is tempted by selfishness, impatience, resentment and anger.

Yet singles are more susceptible to some temptations. Self pity, for example, is a temptation that single men and women need to watch closely. Because they can more easily feel lonely, vulnerable and unprotected, single men and women can feel sorry for themselves because of their state of life. They may become depressed. Divorced men and women can also fall prey to self-pity because of the seemingly hopeless circumstances of their lives. Widows and widowers are frequently gripped with self-pity.

Then too single men and women, especially those separated and divorced, often need to be healed of past hurts,

resentments, bitterness, and anger. The unhappy memories of a previous marriage can still be painful. Nonetheless, even if past mistakes were made and sins were committed, the Lord Jesus wants to pour out his mercy and compassion. He does not want them to live in frustration and anger. He wants everyone to know his love and peace.

For singles, sexual temptations can be a vexing and discouraging problem. Single men and women need to shepherd their emotions, fantasies and imagination. Like all adults, they must stay clear of sexually explicit literature and entertainment. Even though single men and women can be sexually tempted, the Lord does not wish their sexual abstinence to be an oppressive burden. His desire is that they be mature, free sons and daughters of the Father.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation can help single men and women combat sin and live joyful lives in the presence of the Lord. They need not be overwhelmed by loneliness nor engulfed with hopelessness. God treasures single men and women and has a plan for their lives.

An Examination of Conscience for Single Persons

Responsibilities to God:

Have I gone to Mass every Sunday? Have I participated at Mass or have I daydreamed or been present with a blank mind? Have I prayed every day (15-20 minutes)? Have I read the Bible? Have I studied the truths of our faith and allowed them to become more a part of the way I think and act? Have I read any spiritual books or religious literature? Have I told God that I want to love him with my whole heart, mind and strength? Do I hold any resentments toward God?

Have I recognized my need for Jesus and his salvation? Have I asked the Holy Spirit to empower me to live the Christian life? Have I been financially generous to the Church? Have I participated in parish or religious activities? Have I held resentments toward the Church or Church authorities? Have I forgiven them?

Responsibilities to others and to myself:

Have I been rebellious, disobedient or disrespectful to anyone in authority?
Have I lied to or deceived others—friends, boss, or co-workers?
Have I been arrogant and stubborn?
Have I gotten angry or nurtured and held grudges and resentments? Have I refused to forgive others—parents, relatives, employers, former friend, a former spouse? Have I cultivated hatred?
Have I felt sorry for myself or nurtured self-pity?
Have I engaged in sexual fantasies? Have I looked at others lustfully?
Have I read pornographic literature or looked at pornographic pictures, shows or movies?
Have I masturbated?
Have I lustfully kissed or sexually touched someone? Have I had sexual intercourse?
Have I had an abortion or encouraged another to have one?
Have I gossiped about others? Have I slandered anyone? Have I told lies about others? Have I mocked or made fun of others?

Responsibilities to society:

Have I been a Christian witness to those with whom I work or associate? Have I spoken to anyone about the Gospel and how important it is to believe in Jesus?
Have I allowed the Gospel to influence my political and social opinions?
Have I had a proper Christian concern for the poor and needy?
Have I paid my taxes?
Have I fostered or nurtured hatred toward my ‘political’ opponents, either local, national or international?
Have I been prejudiced toward others because of race, color, religion or social status?

Copyright, Fr. Thomas Weinandy. This resource may be reproduced and distributed free of charge by permission of the author.