

# Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

# 29 – February 15, 2008

## How to counteract temptations

Man/woman may have decided to sin no more, but at the same time, he/she is perhaps inclined to go to the ultimate limit of what is permissible. In this way, he/she wants to overlook, either consciously or unconsciously, the attraction of dangerous stimuli. When human desire pursues something, it is difficult to stop it right at the point where sin begins. Whoever plays with fire will sooner or later get burned.

We are so involved with the things of the world, so attached by disorderly bonds of our human nature that resignation and mortification are necessary to purify our love. Everything must belong to God. It is the task of our self-education. God in His teaching adapts to our situation and in the beginning satisfies the feelings in order to attract them and to attach them to Himself. Later, He mistreats them in order to purify them and free them from their whims and attachments to the “self.” Then He sends us emotional dryness, temptations and other difficulties which help us to bring order to our affective domain.

### **Father Kentenich gives us some advice to protect ourselves and to counteract temptations**

**Prevention.** Avoid the occasions, for example, magazines, discussions, encounters, etc.

**Practice “going against” my desires:** give up something (a nap, food, cigarette, TV) which strengthens my will and helps me to maintain ready my spirit to do battle. Here the education of the subconscious plays an important part. I should purify it and nourish it adequately through images, songs (hymns), books, conversations, experiences, etc.

**Cultivate inner peace,** especially with sexual temptations.

**Sexual temptations.** There are persons who in their youth led a disorderly life. As a consequence, their subconscious was left marked in such a way that they lack peace and inner freedom when facing everything sexual. This makes them very fragile and vulnerable when facing temptations in this area.

**Prudence.** He invites us to be prudent when in contact with persons of the opposite sex. Additionally, he speaks of a healthy lack of confidence due to our manifested weakness; but complemented by a great confidence in God.

Father Kentenich considers, for example, that compassion can be dangerous in maintaining purity since as an inner attitude it can be demonstrated by bodily contact. Therefore, he formulates the following principle: always maintain oneself interiorly serene or natural, and exteriorly intact (whole), untouched, according to our state of life.

**Flee from the danger:** from dangerous persons and dangerous situations. At this stage of life, we should all know which are the more favorable opportunities for falling into sin. We also have to know our weak points. Perhaps we might have to avoid certain magazines, movies or conversations. I am told that even in church group meetings, jokes and conversations with double-meaning come up; I do not think they would be very suitable for our spirit of purity.

On the other hand, we also know there are persons who try to provoke us. We are also aware when we are facing a person who wants to seduce us. In all of these circumstances, Father Kentenich proposes a preventive means: **flight or to flee.** It deals with a flight not motivated by fear, but rather motivated by love: love for the spouse, love for God.

I think that with all of this we have more than sufficient occasions to demonstrate our magnanimous love for God and also for our spouse.

When a soul advances on the way to sanctity, God then usually gives the devil the power to tempt it. The meaning of these and of other temptations is to make us smaller and more humble and to acknowledge our frailty before God.

## Questions for reflection

1. What types of magazines or movies do I see?
2. How do I deal with the opposite sex?
3. Do I consider myself a prudent person?

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Translation: Carlos Cantú Family Federation La Feria, Texas USA 021108