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Addresses

## Purity, chastity are habits that ‘clean our hearts’

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*Address to 962: Pure gathering in Colorado Springs to promote abstinence*

Someone asked me this week why *The Lord of the Rings* movies are so popular. *The Two Towers* has made \$400 million in about six weeks. Some of my friends have already seen it two or three times. That's a lot of money to spend on orcs and elves, and hobbits and monsters. But of course, *The Lord of the Rings* isn't really about any of those things. It's about right and wrong, and good and evil. It's about the role even little people play deciding how the big story of human history turns out.

J.R.R. Tolkien, who wrote the books, was a very active Catholic, and from the first page to the last page of *The Ring* trilogy, it's a very Christian story. It's a story about the importance of every individual. It's a story about how each of us has a purpose, and each of us can make a difference. It's a story about courage, hope, beauty, friendship, loyalty, trust, suffering, sin, chivalry and the power of virtue.

That's why it pulls people back into the theaters two or three times. We're starved for that message. God created us for glory. He made us to do great things in His name. God doesn't make losers. He doesn't make unimportant people. Each of us matters, which means that each of our choices matters. We're more than good little consumer-units with appetites. The only things that finally feed us are God's light and God's truth, and we can't be happy until we walk the path He made for us.

Karl Barth, who was a great Lutheran Christian thinker, once said that folding our hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the world. The world doesn't need more toys. It needs more goodness. It needs a revolution — not the bloody kind, but the kind that happens in our hearts. That's why God sent His son: to lead that uprising. And when Jesus says to each of us, “Come, follow me,” He's inviting us to follow the vocation God intends for all of us — to be heroes and warriors in that uprising; to show through the witness of our lives that virtue is beautiful and powerful and brings us joy, because it draws us closer to God.

The great thing about today is seeing so many young people, Catholics and Protestants together, discussing and praying over the virtues of purity and chastity. I admire you. These virtues take real courage today, but you're the future. We old folks depend on you. God depends on you too. He gave you the freedom to choose between right and wrong because He believes in you. He doesn't want slaves. He wants sons and daughters who love Him and build His kingdom because they freely choose to. All God asks of us is that we make our hearts clean so that His light can pass through them to fill our lives. Purity and chastity are the habits that clean our hearts and put our sexuality in right order.

You know, the world often says that Christians don't like sex. That's exactly wrong. It's because we understand the meaning of sex that Christians try to live it in the light of the Gospel. We want *more* happiness, not less. Our sexuality has a purpose, and if we cheapen or misuse it, we hurt ourselves and the people we love — and we also miss out on the joy God wants to give us. The pure heart, the chaste heart, is the heart of a hero. And Christians are called to the privilege of treating each other with the chivalry and modesty and reverence we owe to each other, because God intends us to live forever.

Thanks for being here today, and for letting Bishop Sheridan and me join you. And please keep us in your prayers. Bishops need a lot of prayers, and we'll remember you in ours.