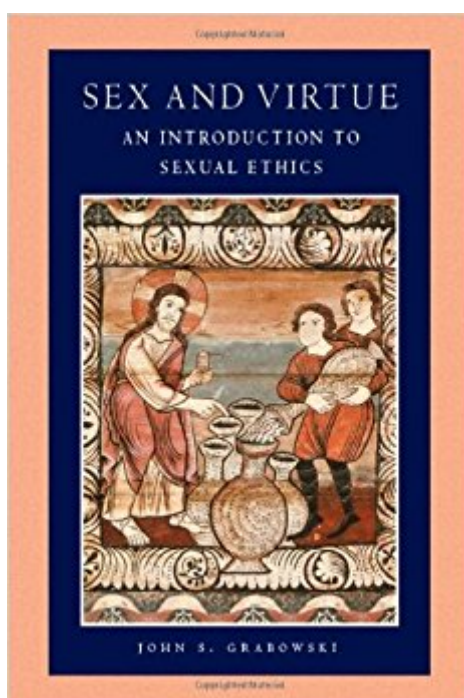


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# Sex And Virtue: An Introduction To Sexual Ethics (Catholic Moral Thought)



## Synopsis

Contemporary western culture is awash in ideologies that reduce sexuality to an outlet for pleasure, an ecstatic form of release needed for personal fulfillment, or a commodity to be bought and sold. Many Christians living in such a culture find themselves uncertain as to how to respond from within churches torn by controversy, embarrassed by scandal, and thus driven into uneasy silence on sexual matters. Catholic moral theology, itself at the epicenter of this controversy over sexual issues since *Humanae vitae*, has struggled to respond to the call for renewal issued by the Second Vatican Council. This book provides a theological foundation for consideration of the moral dimensions of human sexuality from a Roman Catholic perspective. Drawing upon key biblical themes such as covenant, discipleship, and beatitude, it proposes an understanding of covenant fidelity wedded to the virtue of chastity that provides a suitable framework for a Catholic and Christian approach to issues of sexuality in a contemporary context. What is needed to counter dominant cultural ideologies is a vision of sexuality as integral to the human vocation to communion as well as attention to the specific practices that enable persons to grow in moral goodness. This work represents an original synthesis of biblical categories, the tradition and language of virtue, and a theological understanding of the human person. It is also among the first systematic applications of the renewal of virtue theory in recent decades to issues of sexuality. Scholars, students of moral theology, and religious educators will benefit from this groundbreaking work.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** John S. Grabowski is Associate Professor of Moral Theology and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America. In addition to numerous articles and reviews, Grabowski is the author of the foreword to the English edition of Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

**PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:** "In *Sex and Virtue*, Grabowski offers a compelling rationale for the virtue of chastity that takes into account the sensibilities and challenges of the contemporary world. Starting with a brilliantly concise and lucid overview of the biblical basis for sex as covenantal and sacramental, he reveals the positive meaning of the virtue of chastity by analyzing it within the context of personalism and virtue ethics. Grabowski's book is a stellar example of the kind of rapprochement between Catholic moral doctrine and contemporary thought envisioned by the Second Vatican Council." — Raymond Dennehy, University of San Francisco

"*Sex and Virtue* is a splendid result of Grabowski's response to the call of Vatican II to find scriptural support for Catholic moral teaching, especially sexual ethics. Grabowski takes full account of the theological debate that surrounds the issues he treats, but manages to avoid polemics. The reader will not feel awash in debate but will rejoice in being able to follow serenely Grabowski's deft line of argument. The ecumenical potential of this book is

tremendous; Christians can only marvel at the resources in scripture for establishing sexual morality. "a morality that puts sexuality in service of love, life, and salvation." Janet E. Smith, Sacred Heart Major Seminary of Detroit "As a plan for meeting the social and personal challenges to and responsibilities for sexual being, Grabowski's book hangs together well. . . ." Patrick J. Hayes, Catholic Books Review

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A compelling rationale for the virtue of chastity that takes into account the sensibilities and challenges of the contemporary world." -- Raymond Dennehy, University of San Francisco "A splendid result of Grabowski's response to the call of Vatican II to find scriptural support for Catholic moral teaching." -- Janet E. Smith, Sacred Heart Major Seminary of Detroit --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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A well written book concerning matters that most Christians leave to other people. He deals with

them in a way that is both direct and not vulgar or tending toward temptation. His insights were helpful in my own life and his approach to sexual ethics and human sexuality is good for both the Christian and the irreligious.

This is a great overall reference to Sexual Ethics and various sexual discussion items within the world today. It takes a Christian Catholic standpoint to Sexual Ethics, but I could certainly see most people benefiting from reading this. The text is very readable in most cases; however, certain areas are a little confusing according to the author's word usage. This is a good book for those looking to increase their knowledge of Sexual Ethics and to approach the issues revolving around sexual ethics with a stronger backing. I do think that certain issues could have been covered more as well as some issues could have been covered that were not covered, but it's one of those things that could or could not have been covered. If everything was covered in depth, it would have been a multi-volume set, and at the rate of technological advancement, it would have been an incomplete set. Do I recommend people to buy it: Of Course!

I ordered this book for my son's "Sex and Religion" class. He has read the book, and says the following: "I read the text book Sex and Virtue by John S. Grabowski; it was painful reading. I found it to not be a credible source for sexual advice. Grabowski made hard claims and did not back them up. I told my professor to find different sources for the next time." I mentioned that Grabowski makes hard claims but does not back them up. These claims include sexual fantasies and birth control. Sexual fantasies he claims are morally degrading whether acted on or not. Unfortunately he does not say how they are degrading or how to avoid them. With birth control Grabowski claims it defies natural law and gives the rhythm method as an alternative to it. He appears oblivious to the notion that sperm can last for days in the uterus; as well the fact that a woman's menstrual cycle can go out of sync. "Thus, I advise against using this text book because it does not back up what it claims." My son has spoken to his professor about the book's inadequacies, and she states she will look for a better source of Catholic teaching.

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