

How well do you know the Catholic faith? Well, let's find out..."

My son came to me with the question: ***What is meant by fornication? What should I say?***

- A) Fornication is an old Greek word. In today's world it doesn't mean a lot.
- B) Fornication (from the Greek porneia) originally meant pagan sexual practice, for instance, temple prostitution. That's all.
- C) Fornication (from the Greek porneia) originally meant pagan sexual practice, for instance, temple prostitution. Later the term was applied to all forms of sexual activity outside of marriage. Today in English it generally refers to consensual sexual relations between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman.

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Another question which my children think is interesting. They ask: ***Is masturbation an offense against love?***

A) No. it is not a sin any more. This was an unrealistic moral teaching of the Church before the Council.

B) Masturbation is a grave offense against love, because it makes the excitement of sexual pleasure an end in itself and uncouples it from the holistic unfolding of love between a man and a woman. That is why "sex with yourself" is a contradiction in terms. (CCC 2352)

The Church does not demonize masturbation, but she warns against trivializing it. In fact many young people and adults are in danger of becoming isolated in their consumption of lewd pictures, films, and Internet services instead of finding love in a personal relationship. Loneliness can lead to a blind alley in which masturbation becomes an addiction. Living by the motto "For sex I do not need anyone; I will have it myself, however and whenever I need it" makes nobody happy.

C) The moral theologians are divided. Different authors say different things.

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