



13. February 2026
“SAINT FULCRAN OF LODÈVE:
A FRIEND OF CHASTITY!”

The Catholic Church knows many saints and honors them in its feasts. I have decided to remember some lesser-known saints. Today's saint came from a noble family in France and was consecrated bishop of Lodève on February 4, 949. He served as bishop for 57 years and devoted himself entirely to the sanctification of his flock. He opposed vice, abolished abuses, and established the reign of godliness everywhere. His all-embracing love always showed him ways to meet the needs of the sick and the poor in his diocese. Moved by the love he had for consecrated persons, he founded the monastery of St. Salvator, restored several others, and led all spiritual communities to discipline and order. He also did great good for churches and hospitals. God confirmed the people's belief in His holiness through miracles performed at the tomb of His faithful servant. Around the year 1127, his body was exhumed and remained intact until 1572, when the Huguenots threw it into the fire.

The legend of the saint tells us that from his earliest years, Saint Fulcran had a special fondness for the virtue of chastity. Since this virtue has fallen so far into disrepute today and is no longer held in high esteem even within the Church, I will include some reflections on this wonderful virtue as today's meditation. They are taken from a text I wrote for our spiritual family to explain the three evangelical counsels. However, these texts are not limited to vocations to a particular spiritual life in community, but contain many universal elements. Therefore, today I will quote the first part of the text, and tomorrow I will offer the second part as a separate reflection.

Often, however, the beauty of chastity is not understood, even by believers. In a society obsessed with lust, the very term “chastity” can be an obstacle for many who might otherwise embark on this path. One might think of loss of life, dryness, or brittleness. Accordingly, certain frightening images of the monastic vocation arise, which seem to carry a “smell of death,” as St. Paul puts it. For those who know and love God, however, it is “the fragrance of Christ” (cf. 2 Cor 2:16).

These prejudices against chastity are fundamentally mistaken. Chastity, which is closely related to virginity and purity, has extraordinary value because it restores the integrity of the person.

It is not only about physical abstinence, which goes hand in hand with the virtues of moderation and self-control, but also encompasses other dimensions of life.

Chastity as an evangelical counsel should not be confused with abstinence rooted in hostility toward the body. Christian chastity also has its place in marriage, provided that it is lived according to the teachings of the Church and that sexual acts contrary to the dignity of persons are avoided.

Hostility toward the body, on the other hand, is based on a rejection of God's good order and thus represents a rejection of the plan of creation. It can easily lead to inner hardening and aberrant ascetic practices. It can give rise to unhealthy attitudes toward sexuality, expressed, for example, in prudery or affected modesty.

However, chastity is far from being a suppression or denial of natural needs. Rather, it is a path to liberation—a virtue that orders the heart and directs it toward what is right, toward God Himself.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the virtue of chastity as follows: *"Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality, within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being"* (CCC 2337).

Chastity is therefore not a denial of sexuality, but its integration into God's plan for human love. Certainly, discipline and vigilance are needed to protect physical chastity. But with God's grace, this is possible, so that chastity can become a great inner strength for the person.

Ideally, one should follow the evangelical counsel of chastity without having previously engaged in sexual misconduct. In this way, the person can continue on the path begun with virginal integrity and strength. In the past, physical integrity was a prerequisite for entering a monastery. Today, this has changed. Under the loving and ordering influence of the Holy Spirit, it is indeed possible to heal wounded chastity, to be freed from it, and to find it anew in God.

Meditation on the day's reading: <https://en.elijamission.net/division-as-a-consequence-of-sin-2/>