

Caring for the Temple

We are temples of God's Spirit – God's masterpiece in all of creation. Our beauty is beyond compare. Even the great temples of the world – St. Peter's basilica, the Taj Mahal, the pyramids of Egypt – pale in comparison to the supreme wonder of our humanity.

The temple of our very selves is sacred; its riches to be cared for, nurtured and defended. Each of us is called to give the temple what it needs in all its dimensions:

- wholesome food for the body
- meaning and purpose through study and work
- love given and received
- rest for body and mind
- prayer for the soul
- a community of relationships to sustain us in the many areas of our lives
- protection from physical and emotional violation

Much of our care for the temple comes down to making good choices: For example,

- ❖ How we eat: foods that promote growth, healing and repair
versus
foods that are nutrient-emptied or chemically altered
- ❖ Dealing with stress: good nutrition, rest and supportive friendships
versus
over consumption of alcohol or drugs
- ❖ Maintaining boundaries: saying “no” to what undermines our dignity
versus
acceptance of physical or emotional violence
- ❖ Work and family Life: placing work at the service of strong family relationships
versus
workaholism
- ❖ Seeking success: balancing labour, rest, recreation, prayer, family, friends
versus
self-worth through overachievement
- ❖ Peace of mind: detachment and serenity to pursue goals, responsibilities
versus
allowing others' emotional state to determine one's mood

The temple's glory shines with our “yes” to God's gift of life. This “yes” is reflected in works of kindness, truthfulness and joy. The empty deceptions of power, possessions, perceived status or stimulants can never take its place. This is the secret of the saints: people like Madonna House's Catherine Doherty or Calcutta's Mother Teresa. The saints recognized every person around them as a priceless temple of God's indwelling Spirit. Their words and actions upheld the infinite value of persons society often discarded: the poor, the unborn, sick and disabled. Those who choose to care for their temple, and help others do the same will always have the power to change the world for the better.

The temple has boundaries that must be defended. While laws and customs deter others from abusing the temple of ourselves, much still depends on our choices to defend what others have no right to violate. In the Gospel, Jesus himself reminds us that the righteous who have been unjustly violated will have God to defend them at the last judgement. Those like Jesus who uphold the dignity of others will enter with them into his Father's eternal house. We are God's temple; let us never settle for anything less in the way we treat ourselves and those around us.