

A PASTORAL LETTER

ABOUT HEALTHY SEXUALITY



Planned Parenthood

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Dear Friend,

As clergy who represent several faith communities, we write this letter to affirm that your sexuality is an essential dimension of your humanity. We believe that sexuality is God's life-giving and life-fulfilling gift. Our faith traditions celebrate the goodness of our bodies and our capacity for sexual intimacy.

Because our culture and often religion sends so many mixed messages about sexuality, relationships, and contraception, we would like to share some of our understandings.

- ***The Bible affirms that sexuality is a normal part of being human.*** Scripture teaches that our bodies are good and that sexual pleasure is healthy.
- ***Sex has several equally important purposes: reproduction, pleasure, intimacy, and spirituality.*** God blesses each of these purposes.
- ***Though marriage is a high and holy calling in our traditions, we affirm that unmarried persons are also sexual persons.*** We rejoice in our capacity to make sexual choices based on conscience and compassion, reason and responsibility.
- ***The opportunity to bear children is a precious and sacred gift, yet the decision not to reproduce also has deep religious roots.*** A woman's right to follow her own conscience concerning birth control and child-bearing, and a man's obligation to protect her right, are part of what we mean by living lives which are holy.
- ***Our wider obligation as religious persons may require limiting births.*** The well-being of the children we already have and justice in the world may mean that birth control is religious virtue.
- ***Finally, the biblical affirmation that we are all created in the "image of God" means that we can accept no double standard.*** All have the God-given right to lead sexual lives that express love, equality, honesty, commitment, consent, and pleasure.

If it would be helpful for you to talk with a minister, this clinic keeps a list of clergy who will meet with you at no charge and without pressure to participate in our congregations. Please don't hesitate to ask.

Our hope for you is that your sexuality can be the good gift God intends.