



## Modesty: Protector of Authentic Femininity

*Holly Andrade*

**M**y nine-year-old daughter and I were enjoying a beautiful, sunny, Florida afternoon at a professional baseball game, when, during a break between innings, the stadium emcee began a contest designed to entertain the crowd.

He searched the stands for a willing participant and enthusiastically settled upon the most voluptuous woman he could find amidst the many willing fans. His choice (obviously carefully pre-selected) was hoisted up onto the top of the dugout to a chorus of hoots and whistles. Her halter top and tiny shorts barely covered her womanly body.

She was then asked a series of ridiculous trivia questions all designed to make her look even more undignified than her clothing already expressed.

To many in the stands, it was just another day at the ball park. To me, however, sitting next to my impressionable daughter with a prime view of the proceedings, I was angered that even a baseball game couldn't be enjoyed without an onslaught of inappropriate images. There was no way to avoid the foolishness unfolding before us, so after it's merciful

conclusion I asked the Holy Spirit for wisdom as I talked with my daughter about the "contest" she had just witnessed.

"What did you think of that?" I asked her.

"The lady was pretty," she replied innocently enough.



When I pressed her for what she thought was pretty about her, however, she couldn't really answer. So I asked her a few more pointed questions, like; what color was her shirt? How about her hair? Do you remember if she was tall or short? Did she have a nice smile? My sweet daughter had no answer to these basic questions.

Finally I asked, "Well, what **DO** you remember about her?" To which she replied, "Her belly."

Talk about having an "object" lesson right in front of you! We spent the next few minutes discussing the fact that when a woman dresses immodestly, the distraction is so significant, that we cease to understand anything more about her. We don't know if she is kind, or sad, a good friend or someone's loving daughter.

As we live the life of faith, particularly in this increasingly immoral world, it is imperative that we stay close to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the blessed Trinity and the one who was given to us to lead us in a life of grace. We would do well to remember that a number of the Fruits of the Spirit address a right understanding of ourselves; modesty, purity, self-control and chastity. We would be wise women to seek the Holy Spirit on a daily basis asking for His breath of truth to teach us about our true dignity and worth. We must guard our hearts

and minds by avoiding the things that might distort our view of ourselves, such as certain movies, television shows or magazines.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "Purity requires modesty...and modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden...It guides

how one looks at others and behaves toward them..." (CCC 2521) The word "protect" by definition means, "to guard or shield." Modesty is the great protector of our authentic feminine identity!

That same nine-year-old girl is now a lovely 16-year-old and will, during these spring months, be searching for the perfect prom dress. It will be difficult, we suspect, to find a dress that doesn't plunge in the front or plunge in the back, but we will embark together on an exhaustive search that guards her purity and makes her feel both truly

beautiful and truly feminine.

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