"There's a huge elephant in the hockey rink..."

A warm hello to you and to each of my esteemed listeners! Welcome to EWTN's Open Line Tuesday edition. Barbara McGuigan here, alive and grateful to spend some time with you on Tuesdays and Saturdays. God's airwaves are open! Let me give you the numbers to call:

In North America call 1-800-585-9396

Outside North America call 1-205-271-2985

Our email address is always Openline@ewtn.com.

Brothers and sisters, as you well know, it's not easy to be a parent in today's cultural madhouse! Nor is it a walk in the park to be a school administrator! Satan and his minions never sleep! Now we have a group of girls in a Catholic high school in Ontario, Canada, wearing duct tape tops to cheer at a hockey game!

Apparently, this was once an unofficial tradition among some at the school. It was forbidden as the culture became more depraved and the duct tape tops became more revealing. The unofficial practice was halted because a few good parents had the good sense to disapprove of the revealing tops.

Undeterred and armed with lots of chutzpah, some little ladies in the school this past December disobeyed their school's ban on duct tape tops at a hockey game but did have t-shirts on underneath the duct tape. They obviously thought they could overturn the ban that way. And by the way, no one seems to even care about the tight pants some of them were wearing.

The school officials gave the girls a one-day suspension for their disobedience. That upset them and, sadly, upset some of their parents, too. So, as you might expect, there's a huge elephant in the hockey rink that nobody seems to see! If all schools, not just Catholic ones, had decent dress codes, spelling out inch by inch, as you have to do these days, how high, how low and how clingy modest attire would be, duct tape would be doing what it does best: repairing radiator hoses. :)

But here's the 64,000 dollar question: How can you convince young ladies filled with images of Britney and Beyonce wriggling in clothes even more revealing than duct tape, that they must learn who they are, the dignity and honor they possess as children of God, and why immodesty is dishonest, unjust, unloving and unfair...no matter how innocuous they pretend duct tape tops and tight pants might be.

These dear young ladies, so loved by God, need to know that saying "yes" with your bodies, all wrapped in duct tape, and then saying "no" with your mouth, is a cheap shot.

This message is beneath the dignity of a child of the King. To seduce another person, a child of God who has dignity and honor whether he or she knows it or not – to seduce another person to commit sins of impurity, even impure thought – is a sin and tragedy for which we will be held accountable.

You see, our bodies can be the exalted temples of the Holy Spirit that God intends them to be, or they can be sewers. It's up to us to make the decision just how we will use them: for the glory of God or for dishonor.

Once while on a conference speaking tour of Ireland, I learned this analogy from a holy priest, while gazing at a beautiful Irish castle. I've taught this analogy ever since: Modesty is the moat around the castle of chastity. Why did they build moats around beautiful castles? To protect the castle and everyone in it from dangerous intruders who meant great harm. Now, the minute a person's modesty breaks down, this person's protection against dangerous intruders who intend to destroy the stunningly bright castle of purity, breaks down.

Therefore, a woman never wants to dress in a way that would detract from her eyes or her smile. If a man is not distracted by immodest dress or immodest behavior, he can then focus his attention on her self. When he looks into her eyes, he will see more than just the color, he will see her soul – her inner beauty, her strength of character, her virtue, her authentic purity – and he will fall in love with her. This is the woman he can trust. This is the woman who will never place him in an occasion of sin. This is the woman he will want to take home to meet his parents. This is the woman he will want to be his wife and the mother of his children.

Now, don't think for one minute that today I'm going to focus only on the modesty of women. Men can also violate modesty. Sometimes by the way they dress, and sometimes by the way they act: using obscenity in speech, telling off color jokes, holding degrading conversations, and using pornography, which treats other persons not as persons but as objects of lust. When a man violates modesty, he destroys his ability to love in all dimensions. Love never *uses* another human being. Love is not about power or domination. We *love* persons. We *play with* objects.

I wonder if our young ladies would disobediently wear duct tape tops if they had known what retired Bishop John Yanta of Amarillo so beautifully taught – that:

> Dressing or putting on one's clothes is a moral act and wearing them is a moral act...St. John identifies and distinguishes the three kinds of inclinations of all human beings; "For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life is not from the Father but is from the world" (1 John 2:16). The road to modesty starts with the purification of the heart: "Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication..." (Matthew 15:19)...The CCC 2521 states: "Purity requires modesty, an integral part of temperance. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should

> remain hidden. Modesty is decency. It inspires one's choice of clothing. It is discreet." (CCC 2522)

Later, our great Bishop Yanta included an excerpt from a homily by EWTN's Fr. Dominic Mary who said, "Included in the virtue of modesty is not only humility, but also in how one externally dresses."

I thought to myself, "There it is. He hit the nail on the head! To be modest one needs to be humble." How many of our young people today have become bold and shameless? Just look at some of their Facebook pages! They probably can't even spell "narcissism" and yet they are definitely exhibiting the symptoms of a serious mental illness. However, if they've never been taught how to grow in virtue and grace, particularly modesty and purity, how can they be held accountable? And who will take the rap for what they didn't teach? Parents and educators, counselors and clergy – anyone who plays a role in the life of a child.

Yes, my brothers and sisters, our Catechism refers to "the battle for purity." It is definitely that and then some in this culture, but we cannot drop that ball, no matter how unpopular we become. Remember, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton said, "The mother who gives up on goodness forfeits forever." That applies to all of us.

I welcome your questions and comments, brothers and sisters. Do you agree with my assessment of the "duct tape debate?" Do you think the school suspension was in order? Here are the numbers to call: 1-800-585-9396 and 1-205-271-2985.

Closing: A thousand thanks for your edifying calls and emails! And a zillion thanks for my awesome producers, Tom Graye, Elena Rodriguez and Mike Romano!

The late and great Jesuit scholar Fr. John Hardon said:

> In proportion as we want to be made alive in Christ Jesus, we must abstain from those things which bring the death of the flesh. In proportion as we hope for the Kingdom of Heaven, we must abstain from those things which prevent a human being from entering it. In proportion as we hope and long and dream of becoming incorruptible, we must abstain from all the insidious evils that will corrupt.

Until next week on Open Line, Blessed be God and may He mightily bless you! Bye for now!