



FAREWELL TO CHILDHOOD! WELCOME TO MATURITY!

Servants' Meeting
January 29, 2017

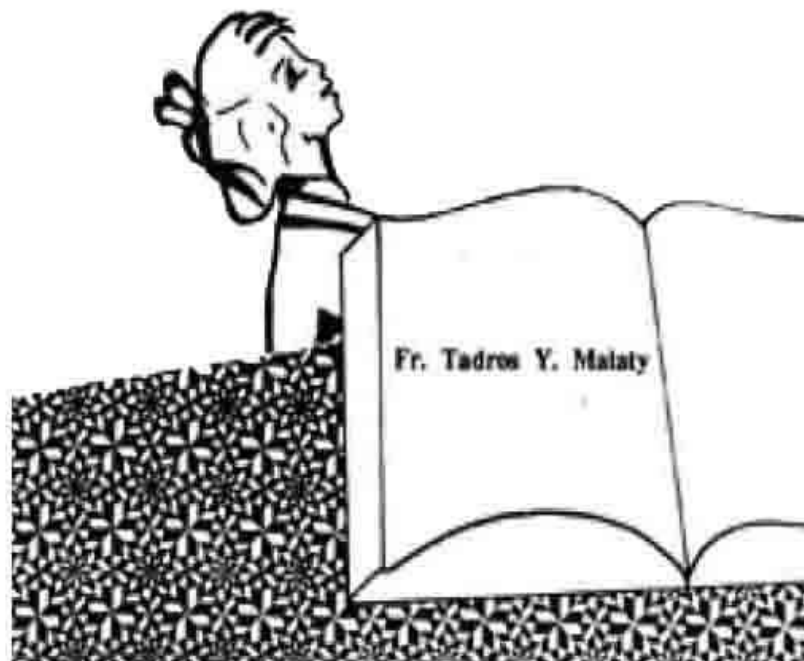
BOOKS FOR YOUTH

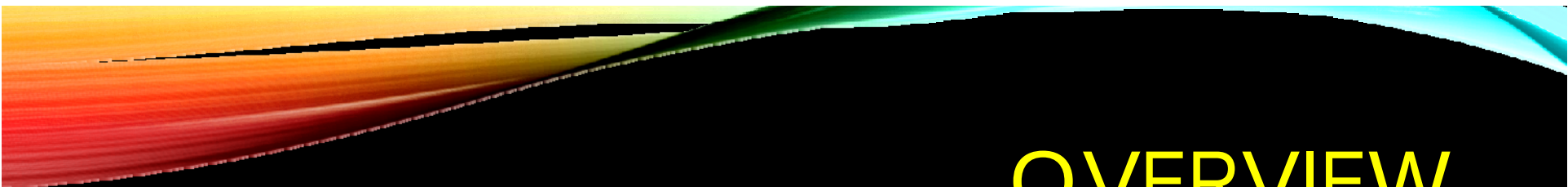
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A YOUTH CRY:

LET ME GROW !!!

A Realistic View into the World of Youth





OVERVIEW

- Need to Feel Respected
- Challenges with Sex
- Give Attention to the Body
- Physical Appearance and Inner Beauty
- Attend to the Mind!
- Emotional Growth
- Maturity and Sexual Life
- Maturity and Social Growth
- Neglect of the Spirit

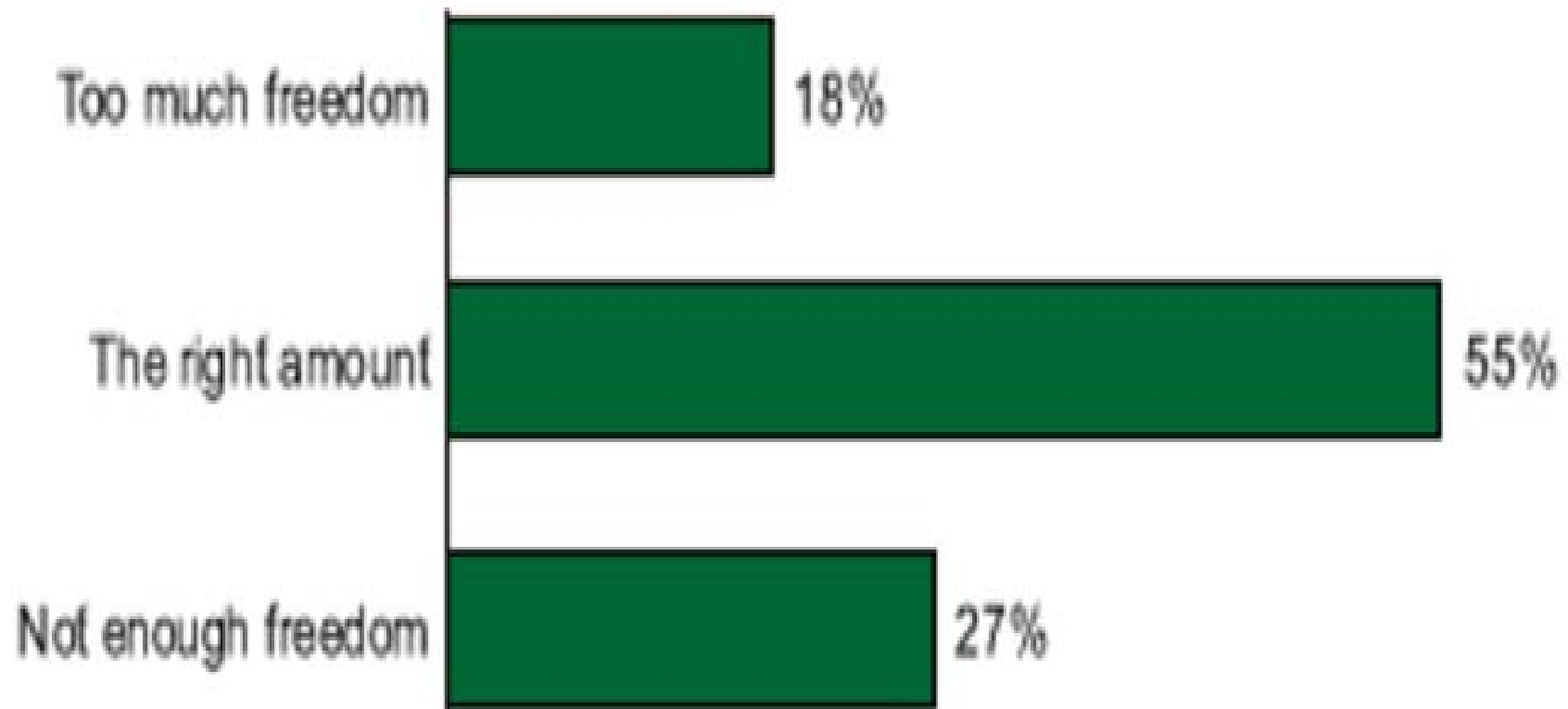
NEED TO FEEL RESPECTED

- Exhibited in freedoms given
- Right to make choices
- More socially active
- Friendships become paramount
- Some parents out of concern, stifle teens
- Differences between Egyptian culture and Western culture



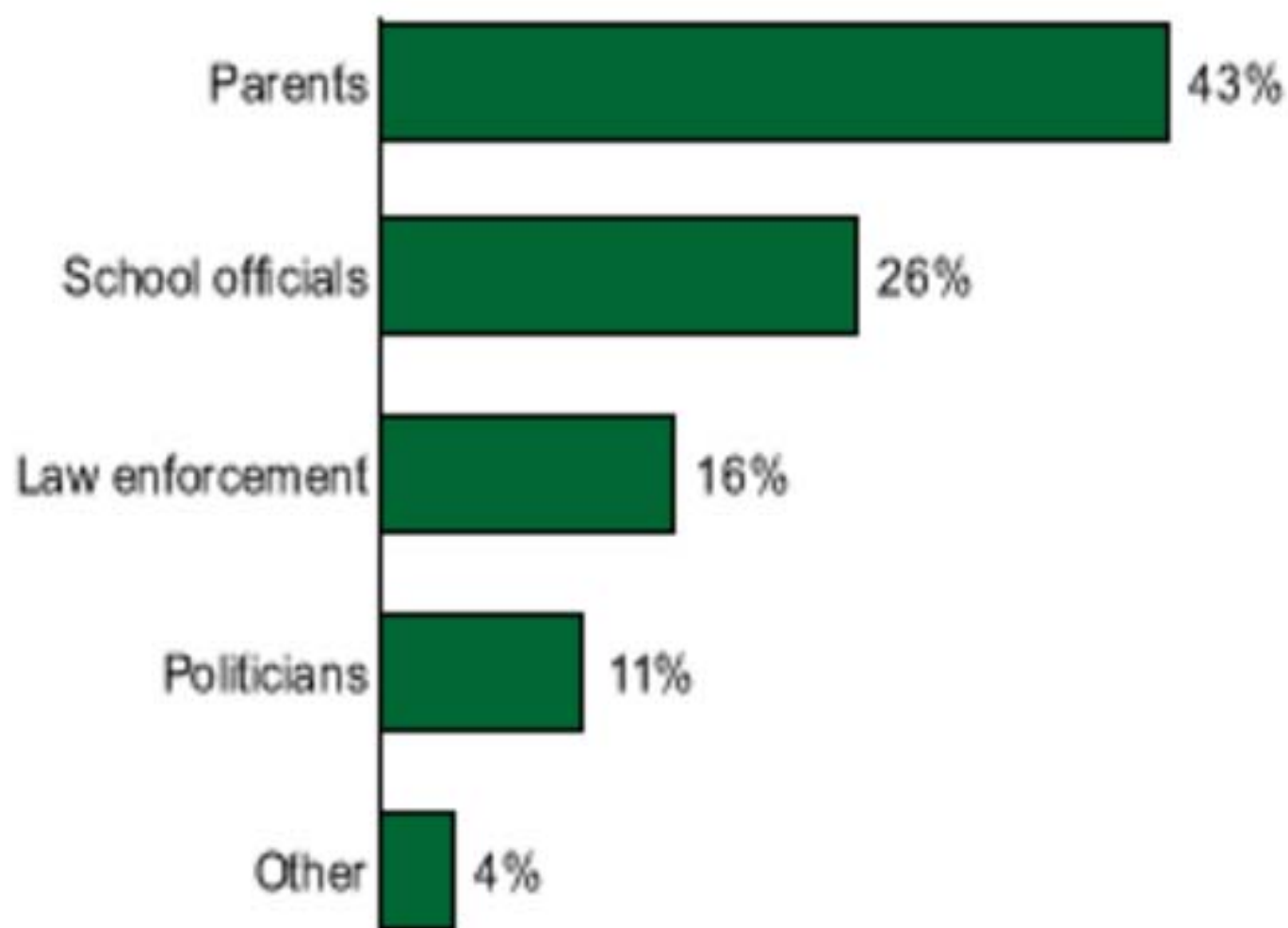
In general, how much freedom do you think teens have today?

Asked of U.S. teens aged 13-17



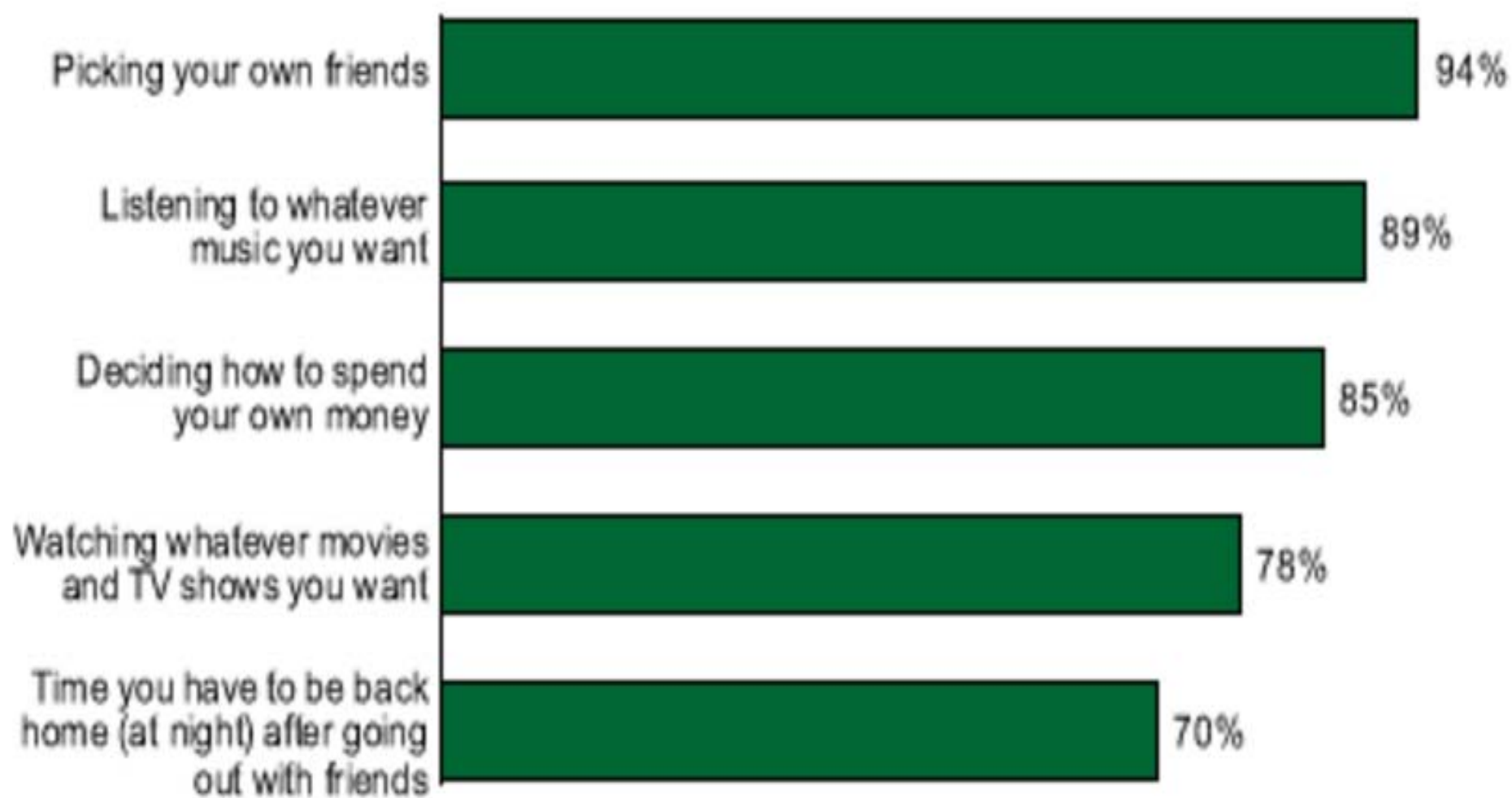
Which of the following groups do you feel is most responsible for teens' lack of freedom?

Asked of U.S. teens who say teens don't have enough freedom



Do you feel you, personally, have enough freedom with regard to each of the following, or not?

U.S. teens responding "yes, have enough freedom"





CHALLENGES WITH SEX

- Sexual traits, but not a sexual person
- Becomes an obsession with some
- Others consider sexual feelings sinful and must be smothered
- People are integrated and do not have isolated parts: physical, psychological, logical, social, emotional, sexual, etc.
- Since individuals have integrated lives, it is appropriate to mention the Incarnate Lord who sanctified the body, senses, soul, and spirit



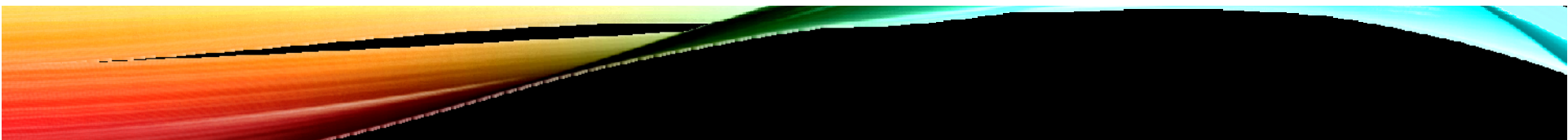
GIVE ATTENTION TO THE BODY

- Two groups: Gnostics and those who worshipped sex
 - The balance is found in the Lord Christ
- Tend to the body
 - The body is need of being healed; not just the spirit
 - St. Paul: bodily exercise
 - St. John the Evangelist playing with a pigeon
 - Pope Kyrillos went on long walks while meditating and praying
 - The body participates in worship

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & INNER BEAUTY

- Hypersensitivity regarding personal appearance, especially among girls
- 80% of teens are dissatisfied with some physical feature that makes them feel ugly or unattractive
- May lead to feelings of inferiority





PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & INNER BEAUTY

- God realizes the struggle with inferiority, so we see in the Holy Bible that He:
 - Allowed Adam to give names to all living creatures even though he had no experience with such a thing
 - Dealt with Moses' feelings of inferiority and assured him repeatedly, thus saving him from destroying himself
 - *"I will certainly be with you..."* (Exo 3:12); *"I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."* (Exo 4:12)
 - Jeremiah: *"Do not say, 'I am a youth... For I am with you to deliver you'"* (Jer 1:7, 8)

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & INNER BEAUTY

- By the Incarnation, the Lord offers:
 - To be a friend
 - To erase the feeling of despair by focusing on all that is good with the person
 - To help us recognize and care for our inner man





PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & INNER BEAUTY

- Story of the girl in LA who stopped by the church to visit
 - Heard Arabic
 - Was an unbeliever who had lived with more than one man in a life of pleasure
 - When asked about her inner feelings, she said that she did not feel safe or secure because there was never a promise of stability
 - Was surprised when told about the “Fatherhood” of God
 - Regarding parents: “Why should I ask, if one of them gets sick, there are hospitals”



ATTEND TO THE MIND!

- God created man as a rational creature to enable him to use his mind
- “Even though emotions appear then to have the upper hand, which is a natural matter, teenagers should couple this fiery emotion with wisdom and mature thought”
- “Possessing a sober mind is a gift of God. A sober mind supports our emotions, perfects them, and develops them, so that our emotions never deviate from their target, becoming a point of weakness that may destroy a youth’s personality”

EMOTIONAL GROWTH

- Some teenagers imagine emotions to be sinful which drives them to abuse themselves
- They are actually God's gifts granted for the purpose of developing personalities and helping youth throughout puberty
- St. Augustine says that those who experience strong and deep emotions are more capable than others in practicing love for God and people, but they are more vulnerable to going astray



MATURITY AND SEXUAL LIFE

- Some teens imagine that maturity is attained through sexual experiences
- It is for this reason, too, that teens are attracted to other vices such as smoking, drinking, clubbing, tattooing, etc. as an imagined way of expressing their maturity



"Oh no, looks like we've finally run out of ways to dress differently from grownups."



MATURITY AND SEXUAL LIFE

- Teens need to understand that:
 - Christianity bestows dignity and holiness to marriage and the marital relationship
 - Sex is in no way a problem that needs to be treated
 - Some people confine sex to simply a physical relation, but it should be considered a symbol of deep and inner love or as an opening of the heart toward all mankind
 - Marital relations are beneficial in that they express a holy unity not just at the level of the body and emotions, but also the level of the soul
 - The happiness of a couple arises from a pleasure shared together

MATURITY AND SOCIAL GROWTH

- The Lord Jesus Christ came to the world to renew and develop the society of mankind by renewing our inner life
- As an example, “the Church faced the problems of society such as the problem of slavery. The leaders of the Church were not angry with the masters, neither did they provoke the slaves against them, but with love, they accepted the slaves as members of the Church. They gave them the same rights as their masters, even appointing some of them as bishops. They also honored their martyrs. Many masters, in the same spirit, liberated their slaves or treated them as brothers. Some slaves, in a spirit of loving obedience, succeeded in attracting their masters to faith. Thus, the Church offered solutions to social illnesses. By adopting a humble and gentle spirit, the Church cured deeply rooted social problems.”



MATURITY AND SOCIAL GROWTH

- Teens typically revolt against social and human discrimination
 - We should not be surprised if we see a teenager ignoring the family and his social class and falling in love with a poor teenager who is not an equal in social or cultural statues
 - We may find an educated boy asking an illiterate girl to marry him, or another boy wishing to marry a girl who does not share his religious faith. One possible explanation for such behavior is that this may be a reaction against feelings of inferiority.
 - Teenagers may be trying to solve or overcome feelings of helplessness by reverting to revolting, violence, and rebellion.



MATURITY AND SOCIAL GROWTH

- Teens must also realize that using violence is most often a reflection of inner rebellion and their lack of peace.
- They express their inner revolution by revolting against the values of society and the family
- Teens may want to establish a relationship with someone who differs from them in thought, culture, even faith, as a way to rebel against his family and society



MATURITY AND SOCIAL GROWTH

- Story of a troubled youth
 - In a fit of rage, threw the Holy Bible on the floor and stepped on it
 - Disrespected the icons of the Lord Jesus and St. Mary
 - Later, it was revealed that he was the son of older parents who destroyed him psychologically
 - They belittled his humanity, his will, and his personality
 - This affected his ability to form friendships
 - Tried to overcome this by revolting against moral and social values in an attempt to attract attention to himself and become a leader among his peers
 - He eventually recognized the deep wounds in his soul and turned with hope to God

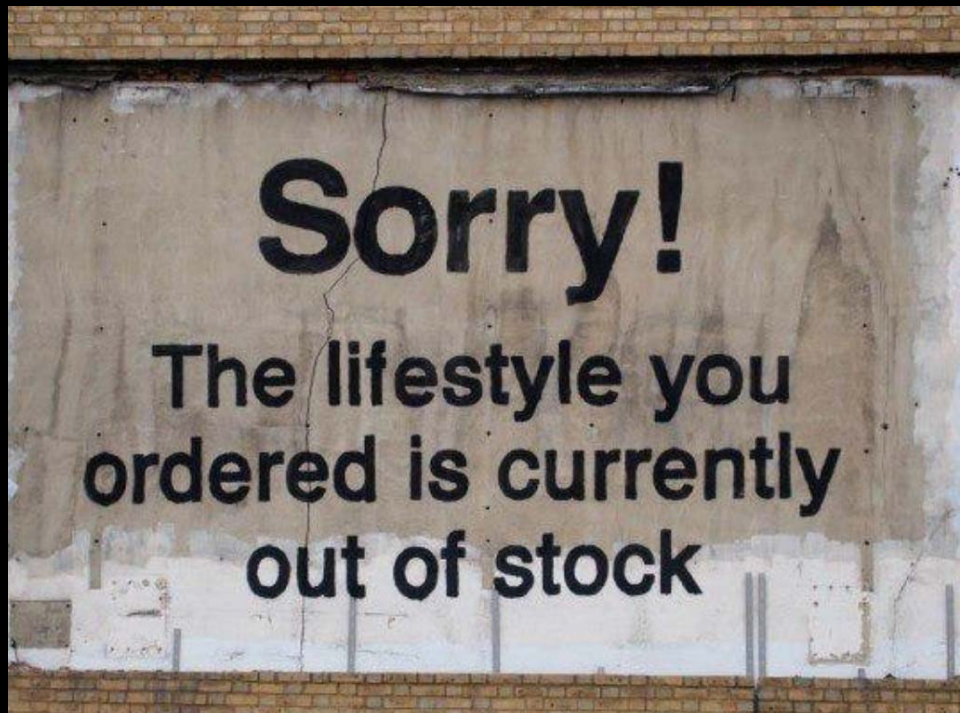
MATURITY AND SOCIAL GROWTH

- Rebellion is often due to bad past experiences at home, school, or church
 - Problem arises at church when the teen does not feel the motherhood of the church through the fatherhood of the priest (and servants)



NEGLECT OF THE SPIRIT

- The body is changing, emotions are intensifying, and sexual feelings are aflame, but the spirit is neglected
- Our Lord Jesus Christ came to us so that we might receive Him as a source of continuous renewal inside **ourselves**. He grants us His Holy Spirit by whom we can attain the new nature and the spirit of inner renewal.





NEGLECT OF THE SPIRIT

- Some professionals say that the “self” of a person includes three dimensions:
 - **Social self:** being preoccupied with what others say about him; in other words, he sees himself as others see him
 - **Oceanic self:** not affected by praise or criticism, but is focused on developing talents and abilities to improve himself for the benefit of others



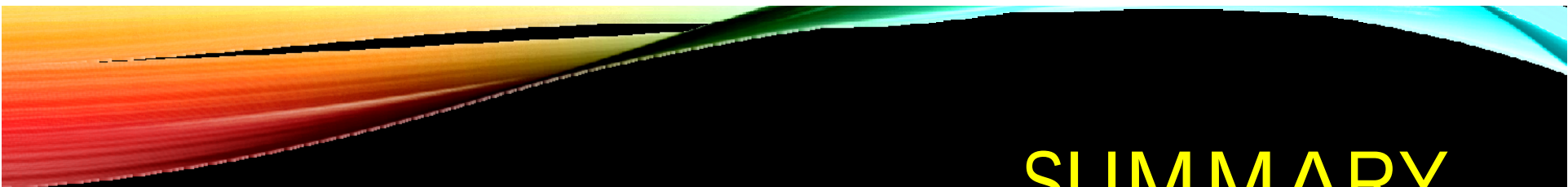
NEGLECT OF THE SPIRIT

- **Core self:** the Lord Jesus Christ illuminates our inner being so we can discover the reality of our “inner man”
 - We realize our holy mission and goal in life
 - We seek a personal relationship with God and realize our sonship to Him
 - We know ourselves and our weaknesses and desire renewal: repentance and confession
 - Constant renewal helps a teen experience peace and joy, the true food of the soul, and to deal with inferiority and loneliness



NEGLECT OF THE SPIRIT

- “Throughout the few years of our service, we have not found a person who continued to be corrupt while his family enjoyed a real and joyful spiritual life, and not merely practiced the formalities of worship or service without spirit.”



SUMMARY

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