

## THE PURSUIT OF PURITY

A meditation given at the June 2004 Ohio State Convention

Our President chose for her theme, "*The Pursuit of Peace and Purity*". Yesterday, the meditation addressed Peace. Today, let us think about *Purity*.

When I begin a writing project, I often go to my books of quotations to learn what others have had to say about the subject. In two books, one of which has over 4000 quotes, I did not find a category entitled *Purity*, nor did I find quotations on the subject. I discovered that I must pursue *Purity* through character, virtue and morals.

In the Oxford American Dictionary, *purity* is defined as "cleanness, freedom from physical or moral pollution, pureness." In her first address as President of Ohio State Chapter, Sue said, "We need to filter our thoughts and words to make them pure before they are spoken."

When our Founders organized our sisterhood, they selected five virtues by which to guide our sisterhood: Faith, Love, Purity, Justice and Truth. As we became P.E.O.'s, we learned that "Purity in life, in heart, in spirit must be our ideal." In the Bible we read from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

What has happened to the virtue, *Purity*, in our present society? Has it become old fashioned, unnecessary, useless, too confining? It would certainly seem so. Our media constantly bombards us with gross tales of depravity. Businessmen and politicians elected to high office are excused for their dishonest and immoral behavior as if morals have no effect on leadership. Howard Stern and other so called entertainers with their vulgar and indecent ranting are accepted as humorous and amusing. The attitude of, "if it feels good, do it", seems pervasive.

Dr. James Kennedy, from his television pulpit, advises that we, as taxpayers, must be concerned about our newest poverty group who are seeking financial aid, the single parent family, the majority being unwed mothers.

Must we accept that *Purity* has become passé, outdated, no longer viable, that the new morality has become the norm?

Peggy Noonan, the columnist, sees an emergence of hope for attitudes regarding character, virtue and morals. Consider the uproar generated by the antics of entertainers during the Super Bowl half-time show. Concern has stimulated discussion on methods to direct and guide the entertainment industry. Even the government, through its F.C.C., is questioning the standards of the industry. The "Passion of the Christ", a religious movie, has drawn millions of theatergoers, much to the surprise of the pundits. Churches and synagogues have begun to attract larger attendance than many movie theaters.

We can be proud that we belong to an organization that is unique in its effort to keep *Purity of ideals* as a part of its regular procedures.

I wish to share with you three quotations by P.E.O.'s who have written eloquently about *Purity*.

Ida Faye Oglesby, PSP, Florida wrote, "Today as never before we need to know the meaning of *Purity*. This delicate and lovely virtue is free from moral fault or guilt; in a world where more importance is placed on the sensual rather than the sinless, or the outer appearance rather than the inner, on personal satisfaction rather than the needs of others."

Eva Lindquist, PSP, California believes, "Certain standards have not changed throughout recorded history, rather man has used them as guideposts in an ever changing and hopefully advancing world. It is so with our sisterhood; there is a source of strength in its basic virtues. We make moral integrity a foundation for our lives, our influence may be felt in far reaching ways, even in decisions far removed from P.E.O. itself."

Mildred Barthel, Chapter U, Utah, expressed it so well when she said, "The star is shining in all its *Purity* as chapter members assist each other. I believe the P.E.O. star will continue to be a light of *Purity* for women of today and tomorrow who share our ideals, among them not the least of which is clear, real, simple and genuine *Purity*."

Helen Bryan, EM - OH, PSP  
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