

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART I
MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM
Part One Chapter One

Man and Woman He Created Them: This is the name given to John Paul's Theology of the Body which he presented in his Wednesday general audiences over 5 years, 1979-1984. **Theology of the Body is God's glorious plan for the body and sexuality and contains the answer to the crisis of our times.**

For Pope John Paul, the most pressing catechetical need of his pontificate was to reconnect men and women with the meaning and nature of their human bodiliness. The modern world must re-discover that man, male and female, is a person in the unity of his body and spirit: the divinely-inspired beauty of the human body which is a revelation of the human person. The human body must not be used or manipulated as an object. Human sexuality is a treasure. It is a sign of the divine image in man, male and female, an invitation to our human freedom to live in that divine image in marriage or celibacy. Theology of the Body is a call to encounter the living, incarnate Christ and ponder how His body reveals the meaning of our bodies. Christ reveals man, male and female, to ourselves through the revelation in His body of the mystery of the Father and His love.

Pope John Paul's Thesis for his Theology of the Body: **The Human body makes the spiritual and the divine visible. It is the sign of the great mystery hidden in God from eternity**

The human body is the sign, the sacrament of the human person because it makes the invisible mystery of that person visible. Likewise God, whom we cannot see, was made visible in Christ, human and divine, Who could be seen. Christ's human body is the sacrament of His Divine Person. So the body is both biological and theological.

John Paul shows us in his Theology of the Body that since the human body makes the human spirit visible, the human body also makes the divine visible because we are each made in God's image and likeness. **This is a Mystery: the hidden reality and plan of God, the inner-most secret of God.** This is so far above our capacity to comprehend that it can only be known if God reveals it Himself. He Has! He sent His Son to reveal it. God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—Himself is an eternal exchange of Love. He has destined us to share in that eternal exchange of Love and the body is a sign of that mystery. The spousal union of a man and a woman becoming one flesh is the sign that communicates this mystery. This is God's design!

We begin exploring Pope John Paul's Theology of the Body with Chapter 1 of *Man and Woman He Created Them*. Please read Matthew 19:3-8.

Pope John Paul begins with Jesus' discussion of marriage with the Pharisees. In this discussion referring to Genesis, Jesus points out that from the beginning there was unity between the sexes who became one flesh. Conflict, tension, jealousy, division are not the norm but the result of sin. Jesus came to restore our fallen natures to God's original plan by His redemption. To Pope John Paul, Jesus' response to the Pharisees provides a foundation for him to address men and women of today to see God's original vision for living as husband and wife, joined in one flesh. Jesus re-established the unity and indissolubility of marriage which was established by God before The Fall. This norm is still present deep within ourselves.

This is "from The Beginning"; so John Paul follows Jesus' reference to The Beginning and takes us back to the Book of Genesis and offers his unique interpretation. Read Genesis 1:26-31

God created man in His own likeness not in the likeness of the other creatures He created. God also created man male and female and declared that man, male and female, bears the divine image. Deeply embedded in man, male and female, is God's call to be fruitful and multiply. The capacity to procreate is a free act of choice. By that choice, man participates in God's creative love. So we see that in the first chapter of Genesis man, male and female, is called to be fruitful and multiply, subdue the earth, and have dominion over the earth. **In Chapter 1, Genesis presents man's external objective creation in God's image.**

But Jesus refers to *both* creation stories in his discussion of marriage as from the beginning. Read Genesis 2:7-9

God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed His own life, His own spirit into him. From the beginning man was created as a personal subject to enter into eternal communion with God. This pure gift which is unearned and undeserved reveals man's greatness, our dignity. This call to be in a relationship with God hinges on our freedom. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the boundary between Adam and Eve's state of original innocence and our historical fallenness.

In *Theology of the Body*, John Paul sets about retrieving knowledge about our original innocence by reversing our experience of lost innocence. This shows that Christ is our way to rediscover the beauty of God's original plan, overcome sin, and live in innocence. **Through Christ we can regain what we lost.** Before the fall, before sin, the original subjective experience of Adam and Eve completely accorded with objective truth. John Paul reconstructs their original experience to understand who we are meant to be. He wants us to understand a few technical things about Genesis. Chapters 1 and 2 are pre-scientific. These chapters contain Myth which is an archaic way of expressing a deeper content. Myth does not mean merely human fabrication. Myth, symbols, and metaphors are means used to enter into the mystery of The Beginning. These original experiences remain at the root of every human experience. Therefore, they reveal truths about the total vision of man, male and female, and the communion between persons.

In Chapter 1 of *Man and Woman He Created Them*, Pope John Paul focuses on three experiences. **The first fundamental human experience he calls Original Solitude.** Read Genesis 2:15-20

God declared that it is not good that the man, Adam, should be alone. For Adam alone means both without woman *and* in the visible world as a person. Pope John Paul points out very perceptively that Adam is not defined as male until after Eve is created. This original solitude, therefore, is proper to man, to every male and female. Each human person has dignity as a subject prior to the gift of sexual difference as male and female. In naming the animals, God gave Adam dominion over them and Adam then realizes he differs from them fundamentally. He doesn't find the helper fit for him among them. This confirms him in his solitude. Adam is aware of himself, has self-determination, and consciously chooses his acts. Animals do not. Adam has become aware of himself as a person. This signifies Original Solitude. **So Genesis Chapter 2 presents us with man's interior, subjective awareness.**

God commanded only Adam not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, not the animals. Why? Because free will to choose would be necessary. Animals do not have freedom. Only persons can disobey God. Being able to love presupposes freedom. We are free to choose the Tree of Life: eternal life in communion with God OR the Tree of Knowledge: eternal death in alienation from God. Our relationship with God is one of both dependence, since man is creature, and partnership, since God extends man a relationship of love. As a unity of Spirit and body, Adam understands who he is and who God is through the experience of his body. This experience reveals to Adam that he needs another person who is body-spirit like himself.

So in his solitude, Adam discovers he is made for communion --- But with whom?

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Read Genesis 2:21-24.

The second fundamental human experience Pope John Paul identifies is Original Unity. Original Solitude flows into and is part of Original Unity and what it means to be a person. Original Unity refers to man and woman sharing a common humanity who become one flesh. It is rooted in man created male and female. Man's completeness is the unity of male and female while each maintains their difference.

John Paul points out to us some Truths concerning woman's creation:

--Adam's deep sleep symbolizes unconsciousness. Adam had no conscious part in the creation of Eve. God worked alone

--When Adam awakes he finds a second self; an other body who reveals an other person: Eve. Adam sees Eve in the purity of original innocence. Eve is an other person Adam could love as God loves.

--Adam fell into sleep with the hope of awaking to a helper fit for him so he would not be alone. He falls asleep in solitude and awakens as male and female, sexually differentiated yet a unity: one flesh.

--The rib is a metaphorical way of affirming that Eve shares the same human nature as Adam, a common humanity, the same dignity. Rib also indicates the heart.

--Bones in Hebrew signifies human being.

Now masculinity and femininity are two ways of being a body-person made in God's image. Adam and Eve complete each other and are each conscious of the meaning of the body. No longer alone, Adam realizes that Eve is the same person as he yet she has different physical characteristics--female as opposed to male. Adam recognizes Eve is a person just like himself.

Read Genesis 2:23. This is the original love song expressing joy for the first time. Adam has found another person, Eve, and they can live in communion.

Before Eve, Adam is sex less: less the female sex. **Without the other, male and female make no sense.** God says this aloneness is not good. Masculinity and femininity have value both for God and for each other. It is very good to exist together, one for the other, united in one flesh. Only two persons are capable of love, being helpmate. The solitude of each maintains uniqueness while simultaneously allowing unity. They are a communion of persons; truly equal. Through this communion each lives together, with and for the other. Thus they rediscover themselves.

To image means to mirror the model. **Man became in God's image both through his own humanity and through the communion of persons.** God is Divine Communion of persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Man is created in God's image through both Original Solitude and Original Unity of man and woman. We see here a development of Catholic thought: man and woman image God in and through their communion. This leads to John Paul's Theology of Sex. (Please note that in Theology of the Body, sex refers to male and female, not marital intimacy.)

The body reveals the mystery of man. Man, male and female, in God's image, reveals something of the mystery of God. In the body, man and woman are called to and enter into communion in flesh and thus image, *in some way*, the Communion in God. This involves understanding the meaning of sexual difference and the call to sexual communion: be fruitful and multiply. **The sexual difference and call to union of man and woman reveal something of the distinction, unity, and fruitfulness within the**

Trinity. Here John Paul is using analogy which is a partial similarity between like features of two things on which a comparison may be based. *There is similarity but even greater dissimilarity.* There is an infinite dissimilarity between us creatures and God who is not sexual!

Read Genesis 2:24. Here is the nucleus of what God wants to reveal: 1. God is an eternal communion of persons; we are male and female in His Divine Image. 2. We are to live in a similar communion of persons. 3. Our ultimate destiny: The Communion of Saints in communion with the Trinity

In Theology of the Body, Pope John Paul attempts to understand who we are as human beings. We must be in touch with the original truth of our being male and female, first in Original Solitude then in Original Unity. When Adam is alone, he is not fully himself. He finds himself only in his relation with Eve. Being human means being a subject and in relation. **However, God is the ultimate end or goal of our existence.** God is totally perfect and complete in His Trinitarian Communion. God shares and gives His goodness and love and creates man for our own sakes out of His gift of love. God wants us to participate in His goodness, His own communion. Creating us shows forth and communicates His glory.

God does not force His gift of love and goodness on us. He respects us as persons and leaves us in our own freedom and power to choose to participate in His gift of love and communion. We choose to open ourselves to receive His gift of faith and make a gift of ourselves in return. Even our decision to respond is a gift of divine grace. Our life is then one of thanksgiving to have been given such a great gift. This is done by entering into relationship with an other person in the married state. Marriage is the fundamental expression of the call to communion. **While on earth, sexual love and communion is our temporal response to our yearning for eternal love and communion with God.** In the celibate vocation, man is called out of his Solitude into communion with God, as partner of The Absolute. John Paul deals with this vocation in a later chapter of his Theology of the Body

For Pope John Paul, “one flesh” denotes the depths of the great mystery of interpersonal communion instituted by the Creator in the Beginning. This is conjugal union. The exact manner of the original incarnate bodily communion of Adam and Eve is inaccessible to us. They were called to conjugal union in a state of original innocence. The original unity of Adam and Eve in which they became one flesh would be both bodily and spiritual. In Theology of the Body, Pope John Paul differentiates between the theological pre-history of Adam and Eve in the state of innocence before The Fall and man’s history after The Fall. In marriage, physical intimacy between husband and wife is a sign and pledge of spiritual communion expressing love, gift, and faithfulness through the body. Seeking to understand the prehistory union is for the benefit of our understanding marital union. John Paul describes Adam and Eve’s original innocence as perfect soul-body integration.

Original sin resulted in the rupture of this body-soul integration. Christ came to restore creatures to the purity of creation. In Christian marriage spouses allow their sexual union to be taken up and re-created in the redeeming sacrifice of Christ. Then they discover their true selves through their gift of themselves to each other. Before sin the spousal relation of Adam and Eve did not detract from each one’s relation to God but facilitated it.

After sin, men and women have the temptation to seek in sexual union the ultimate fulfillment which can only be found in union with God. Sexual union is then an idol obscuring man’s desire for union with God. Christ’s redemption restored the sacramental power of marriage: Husband and wife becoming a gift for each other with utmost respect for the uniqueness of the other; submitting themselves to the original blessing of fertility; renewing the mystery of God’s overflowing, life-giving Communion of Persons. Christ restores our humanity to its original glory and fulfills our deepest desires and aspirations superabundantly.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART III
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The Third Fundamental human experience which Pope John Paul identifies is Original Nakedness. Read Genesis 2:25. This was Adam and Eve's experience of the body. Non-presence of shame for them in their original innocence was NOT like children before they acquire a sense of shame; NOT immodest shameless nakedness. John Paul points out that shame in nakedness is called for when the nakedness threatens the dignity of the person. **Adam and Eve were without shame because nakedness had no threat to their individual dignity.** When Adam looked at Eve, he saw the person she was in her dignity.

The source of shame after The Fall is turning the woman in her nakedness into an object for the man or the man for the woman. Adam did not see Eve as an object for lust nor did Eve see Adam that way. It was original sin that radically changed the experience men and women have of nakedness. Shame entered with sin. For Pope John Paul, there is a positive role of shame: in love, it protects the dignity of the person. Nakedness will not offend or bring shame in the relationship of love between spouses who equally give themselves to each other, see the other as gift and respond equally without shame.

Although we live with original sin, we have roots that reach to the garden of innocence. Jesus directs the Pharisees and us to The Beginning, from our historical sinfulness to man's original innocence. Our sense of shame in nakedness is the "flip side" of Adam and Eve's original nakedness without shame. Generally shame is experienced with and in relation to other persons. When alone, we have no reason to be ashamed of being naked, unless we are doing something shameful with it. But, if a stranger intruded and saw you get out of the shower, instinctively you would cover your nakedness. We do this to protect our selves and preserve our dignity, since the stranger may not respect our dignity as a person.

Whereas in the state of original nakedness, there was no fear of being naked because the response received both affirmed and accepted the dignity as person of the other. Pope John Paul calls this Original Innocence of Knowledge: a profound intimacy and interpersonal communion of the reciprocal self gift of Adam and Eve to each other. The essence of marriage is a common union through the free and sincere gift of self. Lust is the enemy of self-giving.

Original nakedness reveals the purity of Adam and Eve's reciprocal self-giving. Knowing each other in their nakedness communicates the intimate knowledge of each other as persons. Adam and Eve know each other's dignity and goodness as male and female created in God's image. This Original Innocence of Knowledge in their nakedness signifies the original good of the simplicity and fullness of God's vision: the pure value of man as male—Adam—and female—Eve, of their bodies, and of their sex. **Sin and lust remind us that we have lost sight not only of the spiritual mystery of our humanity which God created our bodies to reveal, but also, of the glimpse therein of the mystery of God's divinity.** From the Cross, Jesus' naked body proclaims redemption to us who live under the inheritance of shame. Christ calls us to return to this original knowledge.

John Paul now calls our attention to what he calls the Interior Gaze. Original nakedness describes Eve's total defenselessness and absence of barriers before Adam with complete trust in the sincerity of their exchange. Adam doesn't just see Eve with his eyes but with an Interior Gaze that knows her with the fullness of the intimacy of persons. Total peace suffused Adam and Eve's intimacy. Their Interior Gaze of each other was reciprocal. Before sin, there was no rupture between the physical, the sensible, and the spiritual. Their difference in sex, rather, highlighted the spiritual-sensible unity and difference. To them, their bodies were transparent. Their exterior nakedness revealed their interior nakedness. Originally,

Adam and Eve's perception of the world was perfectly harmonious with God's perception. **Each saw the other as a person who radiated God's glory through their maleness or femaleness.** Therefore, they experienced no shame but rather a deep peace and awareness of their own goodness.

Original Nakedness involved not just seeing the other physically but also seeing the interior dimension which shares in the vision of God who saw that everything was very good. Original Nakedness implies no fear in being seen externally or internally.

God declared that His creation was "very good." The divine motive behind creation, in particular creation of male and female, is love. Only love brings about good and it is pure gift. God gives the gift of creation which man, male and female, receive. Created in God's image, only man can receive this gift on earth. **Only man is created with freedom and self-determination and can receive the gift of God's love and love Him in return.** This is God's original Covenant with mankind. This is the first and primary spousal relationship: *God with man*, male and female, Adam and Eve. This is then the prototype or example for the spousal relationship between Adam and Eve. God created man with a deep inner yearning for this spousal relationship with Him. God then confirmed it in the body by creating man, male/Adam and female/Eve, so that together they express the original gift of creation and the Source.

The gift is God's divine life and Love. **God created man to receive His gift of love and created male and female to give the gift of love to the other.** This is expressed through their complementary sexuality. In creating man, God first gives Adam the gift of his own creation: Original Solitude, aloneness. In order to give this gift to another like himself, God creates Eve: Original Unity-- man, male and female, helper. Man is created in God's image both as an individual and in male-female communion. So the meaning of the body and the communion of male/female bodies is spousal. Genesis 2:23 expresses the joy of man's coming to be as male and female. Genesis 2:24 establishes Adam and Eve's conjugal unity. Genesis 2:25 testifies to their nakedness before one another without shame.

The Spousal Meaning of the Body is an important concept of Pope John Paul's teaching. It is the conscious awareness by man and woman of their bodies as both a gift and a sign of God's love and then sharing this love with each other through the masculinity and femininity of their bodies. This sharing and giving of themselves through their bodies makes God's love incarnate. The original integration and harmony of the interior/soul and exterior/body parts of the human person reveal that the call to love is received in the inner person (soul) and expressed physically through the body. Therefore, Pope John Paul teaches we cannot deal with sex without the person or the person without sex. (Think male/female). **The Spousal Meaning of the Body is the truth that the body and sex is expressed in communion between persons.** The animating principle is love from which flow spousal love and procreation. Through the body, husband and wife love and God blesses them with His gift of fertility. Spousal love involves sexual difference, otherness, and a call to communion through self-giving love and fecundity.

Why is Pope John Paul seeking and passing on the true meaning of our bodies? So we may fulfill the very meaning of our existence. How? God's call to love is etched in our sexuality. Therefore, the meaning of our lives is to love as God loves thereby reaching our final end. The misunderstanding and misuse of sexuality creates a culture of death because man and woman are ignorant of the spousal meaning of their bodies. Original sin resulted in the loss of this meaning. **Through Christ's death and resurrection, grace is poured out enabling Christians to live the original Spousal Meaning of the Body.** John Paul wants us to understand that God's revelation teaches us that the body is not an obstacle or distraction to the Christian life. Our sexuality reveals life's meaning. Before The Fall, Adam and Eve knew total harmony between God's revelation and their human experience:

God revealed the Spousal Meaning of the Body, Adam and Eve discovered it, they consciously lived it. Through sin, we have lost it; The Word took on flesh and revealed it to us again; Jesus gave up His Body, redeeming our bodies so we can re-discover our bodies' Spousal Meaning.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART IV
Man and Woman He Created Them
Part One Chapter One

Man and woman are created by God for their own sake. They cannot be possessed, owned, or taken hold of by another. Originally Adam was free with Freedom of Gift. The sight of Eve's nakedness only inspired him to make of himself a gift to her. Adam freely chose her, inspired by his recognition of Eve's authentic value. He also recognized that she was free to give herself as gift to him, to choose him, inspired by the same recognition. **Pope John Paul observes that man and woman can only be naked without shame when they "are free with the freedom of the gift."** Shame signals the loss of the freedom of the gift. According to John Paul, freedom is self-mastery, self-control. To freely give ourselves away, we must first possess our self, be in control of our self and our desires.

Remember, though, for Adam, self-control did not involve keeping unruly desires in check. This enters in after The Fall. For Adam, sexual desire was pure as created by God: The power and desire to love as God loves. Adam and Eve reveled in the goodness and beauty of the other in accordance with God's creating love. Therefore, they were naked without shame. In re-discovering the Spousal Meaning of the Body, man and woman are set free. Christ set us free for this freedom. The body's Spousal Meaning is revealed in our anatomy as male and female and fulfilled in the freedom of the gift of man and woman to each other. The reciprocal giving and accepting of the gift creates a communion of persons. **Sexual union is intended to be the affirmation of the goodness of each as person through the giving and receiving of the gift of each self.**

The sexual embrace says: "I am giving my self totally, freely, and forever to you. As I am receiving the gift of your self you are giving to me. I affirm all you are, totally, forever." Sexual union that does not say this is not in accord with the Spousal Meaning of the Body as intended and created by God. It cannot satisfy the longings of the heart placed there by Him and doesn't correspond to the dignity of the person created in the image of God. John Paul says man and woman are made for spousal love. Interiorly and exteriorly it is stamped in his and her total being, body and soul. **Man and woman can only find the happiness each seeks by discovering the Spousal Meaning of the Body.** The experience of sexuality may be distorted but the desire for spousal union remains always at the deepest core of the person.

Pope John Paul seeks through Divine Revelation to understand the original experience of the body before The Fall so we can understand what we have fallen from and therefore what we are called to and created for. **In Christ, who assumed a human body, we are called to recover the happiness that comes from living according to the truth of our bodies.** He gives us the power to do so. It all stems from Love: the origin, vocation, and destiny of each human person. Love created Adam and Eve in the state of Original Innocence which meant complete integration and unity of soul and body, spirituality and sexuality. This is possible through grace which is God's self-gift to man and our participation in God's holiness.

Sin introduced shame to humanity. It altered sexual desire to seek to use the other rather than be a gift to the other. It sees the other as an object to be manipulated for its own pleasure, and refuses to be gift itself. It drains the gift of meaning. Adam and Eve entered the world with the full knowledge of the Spousal Meaning of their bodies. They participated in God's mystery by loving each other as God loves. After The Fall, we lost this original experience of God's plan. We became disconnected from what can make us truly happy. **Through his teaching, John Paul reconstructs this Theology of the Body to reconnect us with God's plan of gift in our body and heart.**

Understanding the Spousal Meaning of the Body helps us make sense out of the Church's moral teaching. It isn't arbitrarily imposed rules of what we ought to do or not do. The teachings are rooted in who God

created us to be. The objective laws point us to how we should desire to live. God created us as subjects: we know we are some-one; we are not objects: we know we are not some-thing. God created us free so we can freely choose Him. He doesn't force His Will on us. **God wants us to freely choose to participate in His will for us.** So He initiates the gift of His loving Plan and invites us to participate. Then we choose; God respects our choice. Adam and Eve experienced the objective good as good because they freely chose to make God's will their own...until The Fall. Now man, male and female, must rediscover the Spousal Meaning of the Body inscribed in the depths of the human heart. We must defend each person as a subject not allowing anyone to be seen or used as an object. To do this we must open ourselves to the grace that has been poured out by Christ for only grace can aid us to fulfill the meaning of our existence and being.

Pope John Paul now explores the procreative meaning of sexual difference. Read Genesis 4:1. Adam "knew" Eve and she conceived a child. The Biblical word "knew" penetrates the sexual act to its deepest level of the experience of interpersonal unity. This knowing distinguishes the sexual union of man and woman from animals' reproduction activities. Animals reproduce according to nature, instinct. Man and woman, husband and wife, are given to each other in order to be "known" by each other. **Each is a unique and unrepeatable person who reveals themselves to the other in becoming one flesh, freely giving and freely receiving.** Simultaneously, in the unity they become a single subject while remaining two distinct subjects. Each discovers their true self as they give the gift of self and experience knowing the other and being known by the other.

As man and woman "know" each other in the spousal embrace, a "third" springs from them both. Therefore, fatherhood and motherhood reveal the mystery of human sexuality. This power to generate new life is indissolubly bound to the mystery of the Trinity's eternal generation. Pope John Paul connects fatherhood and motherhood with the mystery of man and woman as persons made in the image of God. That divine image is renewed each time a man and a woman become one flesh opening themselves to the blessing of fertility. (CAUTION: THIS IS AN ANALOGY! The Pope doesn't define *how* this fruitful communion images the Trinity Who reveals Himself as Father, Son, Holy Spirit not husband-wife-child!)

John Paul, at this point, says a few words about woman—reminding us that a woman's constitution differs from that of a man's. The significance of this difference is that God chose her body to be the place of conception, of new life. Eve's cry, "I have gotten a man [child] with the help of the Lord," expresses the mystery of begetting and procreating, the mystery of creation renewed in human generation and God's creative participation.

The Original Unity of the sexes was to be a sign revealing the Trinity's inner life. Through sin, satan distorts the union of man and woman turning it into a mockery of God's life and love. The act meant to unite God with man, male and female, divides instead. **Contraception is a specific attempt to remove the potential of generation of a "third" from the "knowing" between husband and wife.** Pro-creation in the marital embrace generates a child, who shares the humanity of his parents. This "third" is a human person, bone of their bones, flesh of their flesh.

John Paul concludes Chapter 1 by acknowledging that modern men and women have questions about the nature of marriage much like the Pharisees who questioned Jesus about divorce. He believes that Jesus' response to them is just as pertinent today. We have gained tremendous scientific knowledge about the body. Unfortunately, that knowledge often causes the human body to be reduced to an object. **Biblical knowledge recognizes the body as the revelation of a personal subject endowed with inviolable dignity.** Pope John Paul wants to move us beyond the many partial perspectives floating around today toward a total vision of the human person. Theology of the Body must inform a science of the body to give adequate answers to modern questions about the body and human sexuality and marriage and procreation, which do have a definite religious and theological quality.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART V
MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM
Part One Chapter Two

This is a continuation of the series on Pope St. John Paul's *Man and Woman He Created Them*. Theology of the Body, as it is commonly called, is designed to help us understand God's original purpose for our physical bodies and how to move on past our fallen, sinful human nature to live liberated by Christ's redemption.

Parts I-IV covered Chapter 1, in which Pope John Paul appeals to The Beginning. The next five parts will cover Chapter 2. The Pope appeals to the heart, once again using Jesus' words. The Holy Father tells us that, "*Jesus brings about a fundamental revision of the way of understanding and carrying out the moral law of the Old Covenant.*" (*Theology of the Body* 24:1)

The Pope begins Chapter 2 by quoting Jesus' teaching on the Sixth Commandment in the Sermon on the Mount:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28)

Jesus includes one's desire and heart in God's prohibition of adultery. Our interior disposition precedes the exterior act of engaging in sexual intercourse with one who is not our spouse. John Paul calls us to go beyond exterior ethics to an interior ethos: an inner sphere of morality and values. In speaking of committing adultery in the heart, Jesus means lust. He brings us back to The Beginning again: before sin, when physical, sexual desire was enveloped in Divine Love...and He calls us to live with purity of heart.

Pope John Paul then refers us to 1 John 2:16-17:

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever."

This is the three-fold concupiscence which comes from the world deformed by sin, by man, male and female, who turn their hearts away from the Father's Love. Human experience confirms the reality of sin.

John Paul next brings us back to Genesis again, looking anew on the moment of Adam and Eve's temptation by Satan. Recall from Chapter 1 of *Theology of the Body*, that God gave our first parents existence as a pure, free gift of love. This gift was to be freely given to the other, thus participating in God's image and likeness. Participating in God's love is the deepest yearning of our hearts. Satan tempted Adam and Eve by distorting God's gift of love and insinuating that God was actually withholding His love by not allowing them to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. So, Adam and Eve committed the first sin by reaching out and grasping the fruit. Rather than accepting God's love as gift, they cut themselves off from the Father.

In *Theology of the Body*, Chapter 1, the Pope pointed out that God's gift of love was expressed through their bodies in their experience of original nakedness. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened as Satan said; but what they "saw" was their nakedness...they realized they lost what God had freely given them and were alienated from the Love of the Father. Shame enters their lives...and concupiscence.

For Pope John Paul, concupiscence means a lack...God's love is lacking in the human heart. Concupiscence—lust—now replaces the Love of God flowing through each of them and giving each as gift to the other...the spousal meaning of the body. Now they lust for each other as objects for selfish physical gratification. Adam and Eve also realize they lost their self-control, their self-mastery, their perfect body/soul integration. No wonder they hide from God when "*the Lord God walks in the garden in the cool of the day.*" (Gen. 3:8) They know they broke the covenant with God; knowledge of their nakedness--which reveals the interior movement of the heart--proves it. They closed their hearts to God's gift. They experience shame because of their betrayal of God's trust and His Gift revealed through their masculinity and femininity. After sin, we now cover our bodies from the opposite sex to protect ourselves from the threat of lust.

Jesus refers to lust as adultery in the heart because like lust, adultery is outside marriage and contrary to the dignity of the person. John Paul maintains there is a positive aspect of shame: To preserve reverence for the value of the person. Lust is a distortion of the human heart, sexual relationship, and desire. The human heart still hears the echo of God's plan for sexuality from The Beginning and aches for it.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART VI
MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM
Part One Chapter Two

Pope John Paul teaches that because of original unity, Adam and Eve experienced peace in their relationship which satisfied the longings of their heart. With original sin, concupiscence now distorts the conjugal union of couples, shattering that relationship. Lust does not satisfy the communion we were originally created with, even though after sin we still desire that communion. There was complementarity of masculinity and femininity in The Beginning; now sexual difference is in opposition, divided: “*male or female*” rather than “*male and female*” (TOB 30:5). Sexuality and the body are objectified causing us to cover our bodies so as not to be seen as an object. The trust inherent in man and woman’s original communion has collapsed. So that rather than a sincere gift of self, concupiscence brings about self-seeking gratification.

Next John Paul addresses the specific effect of the Fall on women. He quotes Genesis 3:16:

“I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

Originally, woman’s special gifts were the embodiment of receptivity: to God, to man, to new life. After sin, not only is this gift seen as a burden but it has become a reason for inequality, domination, prejudice, and control. Now lust distorts a man’s initiation of love resulting in domination and control over woman. He uses her for his own ends. Still woman desires the man and sin causes her to allow herself to be used. She also treats him as an object using him, arousing him, drawing him to her. Both male and female are subject to concupiscence each in a different way causing opposition between the two.

The original spousal meaning of the body was corrupted by sin. *Becoming one flesh was a union of two persons not just two bodies.* Now, fear and shame exist between man and woman rather than trust.

In his *Theology of the Body*, Pope John Paul helps us understand that the body reveals the person, so how we live our sexuality in our bodies flows from the attitude in our hearts towards the meaning we have of the body, sexuality, and life. Jesus appeals to this experience when He speaks of “looking with lust.” We know in our hearts our guilt. But deeper in our hearts is the remnant of God’s original plan. Jesus calls us to discover God’s objective meaning of our body and sex (sex refers to male and female) and connect it to how we live in our body subjectively. Jesus calls us to recover sincere self-giving and combat lust and concupiscence allowing His redemption to transform our hearts.

Concupiscence and lust have not destroyed the spousal meaning of the body but does constantly threaten it. As Pope John Paul observes, “*the ‘heart’ has become a battlefield between love and concupiscence*” (TOB 32:3). We are not completely depraved because of sin. But we must fight concupiscence to make a sincere gift of self. The difficulty is increased since lust often disguises itself as authentic love. We fight concupiscence by gaining control of our hearts.

Concupiscence caused us to lose the Freedom of the Gift. We lost control of our bodies and hearts. To regain control requires self-determination: controlling sexual impulses not being controlled by them. Initially the Will must repress the passions. But the goal is to *transform* emotions and feelings through the redemption of Christ, to freely desire the good, and to live in His Freedom in holiness and reverence free from lust, from concupiscence. John Paul proclaims that this freedom truly occurs with the redemption of the body.

There is a diversity of roles in the relationship between male and female which enables true life-giving communion. This is impossible without the difference of the sexes. To make a sincere gift of self and create an authentic communion of persons requires self-mastery. The man is “*the guardian of the reciprocity of the gift.*” (TOB 33:2) He initiates the gift of himself putting his self in the hands of the woman waiting and trusting the woman to receive his gift and respond freely giving the gift of herself to him.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART VII
MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM
Part One Chapter Two

The Pope now examines Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5 more closely breaking it down into three parts:

1. "It was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'":

Jesus is referring to the Sixth Commandment. His Jewish audience was very familiar with the Law. John Paul observes that even though polygamy was practiced in the Old Testament, the Commandment presupposes monogamy. Jesus moves beyond the man-made compromises of God's original command.

John Paul cites Israel's prophets who understood the true meaning of the Sixth Commandment when they compared Israel's unfaithfulness to God with adultery. **Adultery is a sin because it breaks the covenant between a man and a woman.** Bodily union is the sign of married love. Husband and wife are "*called, in the very mystery of creation, to exist in the communion of persons 'in the image of God.'*" (TOB 32:1)

2. "Whoever looks with lust...":

When Jesus mentions "lust," his audience would have considered the Old Testament Wisdom teachings which contain repeated references to lust and admonish: **Turn your eyes away.** Lust will cause you to objectify a person. Jesus died and rose to free us from sin. His grace transforms us to recognize the dignity of the person and look with eyes of love at this one who is a sign of Divine Love.

John Paul cites descriptions of concupiscence from Old Testament Wisdom Literature. He states that concupiscence "*invades his senses, arouses his body, draws the feelings along with itself and in some way takes possession of the 'heart.'*" (TOB 39:2) His conscience is quieted and he seeks to release his desires. Tragically, the lust never satisfies and peace is never achieved. The solution: A radical transformation in Christ to love as God loves.

The Holy Father addresses modesty that is only external. That avoids looking lustfully but still inwardly desires the person, thus committing adultery with her in his heart. Today, opportunities to "look lustfully" abound. Concupiscence...being inclined to sin...is not a sin. *To*

commit sin, the Will must be involved. Struggle against the temptation brings growth in holiness and virtue. But acting upon the temptation of lust brings it into the heart—showing who a person is and how he sees the bodies of others.

A heart mired in concupiscence denies the gift of creation by God and sees creation, even persons, as things to be grasped. We were originally created to see everyone and everything in creation as gift—offering ourselves to God and each other in thanksgiving. Lust denies God's gift of the dignity of sexual difference. Lust does not wait to receive the woman as gift but grasps at her as if she were an object.

Remember, even though the example is man it applies as well to woman. The concupiscent person does not see the awesomeness and wonder of the gift of God's creation but uses them selfishly. Lust therefore blinds one to the meaning and value of the body and the person herself. The lustful look reduces the other person to an object of selfish fulfillment of needs. He is not looking at the beauty of this person which is revealed through her body.

3. “Has committed adultery in the heart...”:

For Pope John Paul this is the key to understanding Jesus' words correctly. According to Jesus, a man who looks lustfully at a woman not his wife commits adultery in his heart. But the Pope doesn't stop there but asks if Jesus approves of a man looking at his own wife with lust?

John Paul states, *“Adultery ‘in the heart’ is not committed only because the man ‘looks’ in this way at a woman who is not his wife but precisely because he looks in this way at a woman...even if he were to look in this way at the woman who is his wife, he would commit the same adultery ‘in the heart.’”* (TOB 43:2) With this statement, John Paul is calling a man to uphold his wife's dignity...**and vice versa.**

If man and woman were created to exist for each other through their free gift of self, lust will deeply change the way the woman exists for the man. Lust reduces the woman to an object which exists merely to satisfy carnal desires. The woman is robbed of her dignity as a subject created in the image of God.

If a husband treats his wife as a lustful object to satisfy his physical wants, he can commit adultery in his heart. Marriage doesn't mean husband and wife are entitled to use each other selfishly. **Marriage is to be a sign of God's love in the couple's free gift of self to each other.**

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART VIII
MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM
Part One Chapter Two

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls men and women to a change of heart... *“a transformation of the human person’s consciousness and attitudes...such as to express and realize the value of the body and sex [male/female] according to the Creator’s original plan.”* (TOB 45:3) Christ, and Pope John Paul, are calling us to a radical change of heart and understanding of sexuality and sexual desire, namely **purity of heart**. Jesus’ redemption makes this possible by working with grace and virtue to reject concupiscence. Lust works against God’s call of man and woman to form a communion of persons. Lust produces a culture of death which doesn’t respect life.

At this point in Chapter 2, John Paul turns his attention to a practical examination of Jesus’ words. Do Christ’s words accuse the human heart or call the human heart to the good? If our human actions flow from the heart as Jesus points out, then our morality calls us beyond “our duty” to living a moral life from the love in our hearts. In Jesus’ teaching on lust and adultery in the heart, the Pope stresses that Jesus is not saying that the body and sex are evil. Rather Christ condemns the distortion of lust in one’s heart as evil.

As part of God’s good creation, Jesus affirms the dignity of man’s body and sex. Christianity highly values the body and sex. As John Paul states the, *“body in its masculinity and femininity has been called ‘from the beginning’ to become the manifestation of the spirit. It becomes such a manifestation also through the conjugal union of man and woman when they unite with each other so as to form ‘one flesh’”* (TOB 45:2) So much so that this is a **sacramental sign**.

Christ calls us to rediscover this and live accordingly in action and thought. Especially in recognizing **lust in the heart as evil** and never transferring evil to the object of lust...the woman (or man). Overcoming lust in the heart involves recognizing the true value of the woman’s body and femininity (and the man’s body and masculinity) and acknowledging the dignity of the body, its value, and

beauty. We have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit through Christ's redemption to strengthen and help us as we battle the temptation of lust.

Jesus is calling us, His followers, to reclaim the spousal meaning of the body, regaining what was lost in Paradise; to live in what John Paul calls the **ethos of redemption**. Believers imbued with the Holy Spirit can move past concupiscence and lust to a radical change of heart. We do not have to live chained to the consequences of our fallen human nature.

With Christ, we move beyond merely controlling lustful passions to mature self-mastery: dying to lust and rising to victory over it. To believe one can do this is to believe in Christ's death and resurrection—His victory over sin. Yes, this is a life-long struggle—we are engaged in spiritual warfare during our lives. We are called to suffer for the truth of Christ, but the victory is *“the rediscovery of the meaning of the whole of existence, of the meaning of life...another vision of man's possibilities.”* (TOB 46:6) This is accomplished through grace: the life of the Holy Spirit Who is the Love and Life of the Trinity, who transforms the human heart from lust to Freedom of the Gift.

Pope John Paul addresses the problem of identifying lust as merely eros: erotic sexual desire. The Pope moves **eros** into a purer meaning of **seeking the good, the true, and the beautiful**. Opening our hearts to this meaning establishes the good in sexual desire between husband and wife. Jesus calls us to turn **from** lust and **to** transformation in purity of heart. This is accomplished daily by taking up one's cross and following Christ. One must reflect interiorly each day on what is good, true, and beautiful in our sexuality and what has been distorted by lust and concupiscence. This will lead to fulfilling God's call to an authentic gift of self and a communion of persons.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART IX
MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM
Part One Chapter Two

Jesus brings mankind a new ethos: *“the ethos of redemption and especially the ethos of the redemption of the body. (TOB 49:2)* This is how we are to live. We begin by acknowledging our own sinfulness and need for redemption. Then the new ethos will resonate with the deepest desires of our hearts and draw us to live according to Christ's call in the Sermon on the Mount.

Denying lust opens one to an awareness of his dignity and one's freedom to choose the good, the true, and the beautiful. **Lust is a distortion of Love.** It is Love that God created us for in The Beginning and it is good. The more we turn from lust to a sincere gift of self in love, the more we live the ethos of redemption of the body.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaimed, *“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”* (Matthew 5:8) John Paul now turns to purity of heart which expresses life according to the Holy Spirit. For the Pope, purity *“is the glory of the human body before God. It is the glory of God in the human body, through which masculinity and femininity are manifested.”* (TOB 57:3)

Man and woman lost this purity through sin. Jesus came to restore it, to purify us from within. **God created man (male and female) as a unity of body and soul...which was very good.** The tension of flesh against spirit in us is the result of original sin. In Romans 8:6 St. Paul wrote that *“to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”* This is how Jesus calls us to live. It is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. We experience this by faith in Jesus Christ. Justifying faith in Christ's redemption changes the heart which changes behavior.

The Holy Spirit works interiorly to change the heart to live according to the Fruits of the Spirit, freely living as God created us to live. Pope John Paul notes *“the new ethos of the Gospel is nothing other than an **appeal to human freedom**, an appeal for its fullest realization.”* (TOB 53:1) Freedom does **not** mean being allowed to indulge one's passions and lust without limit. Freedom in Christ **is** freedom to receive God's gift of the Holy Spirit and be a gift to others.

To live in Christ's freedom is to follow the teaching of St. Paul: *“abstain from unchastity...keep the body in holiness and reverence.”* (1 Thess. 4:3-5)

We are called by God for holiness not impurity. Revering our body in our hearts brings self-control over concupiscence. Ultimately, we labor to submit our disordered passions to Christ to order them and make them right. For this to occur a person “*must open himself to life according to the Spirit...in order to find again and realize the value of the body, freed by redemption from the bonds of concupiscence.*” (TOB 58:5)

Purity respects the body and God’s plan for sexuality and the body in creation. Through redemption in Christ, the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit along with the soul. **This is the dignity God has bestowed on the body!** Christians are called to behold this dignity in ourselves and others, especially male towards female and female towards male. Pope John Paul relates this to “*...the experience of the spousal meaning of the body and of the Freedom of the Gift connected with it.*” (TOB 57:2) Freedom for love. Purity of heart allows us to see God’s glory and goodness in creation; impurity blinds us to it. God calls us to discover the dignity of persons and the truth of humanity, embracing redemption and growing in purity in order to make a sincere gift of the body in inter-personal communion.

In the appendix to Chapter 2, Pope John Paul discusses the portrayal of the human body in art. The difference between pornography and presenting the naked human body in art is the intention of the artist. Pornography ignores the dignity of the human body, purposely arousing lust for profit. True art respects the spousal meaning of the body and has pure intentions to convey the beauty and goodness inherent in its masculinity or femininity.

Pope John Paul refers to his teaching as a “theology of the body,” and more specifically a “spirituality of the body.” Our Holy Father’s goal with his first catechetical teaching as Pope was to give a deeper understanding of the teaching of the Church on sexuality and sexual morality, particularly contraception.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART X

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part One Chapter Three

This is a continuation of the series on Pope St. John Paul's *Man and Woman He Created Them*. Theology of the Body, as it is commonly called, is designed to help us understand God's original purpose for our physical bodies and how to move on past our fallen, sinful human nature to live liberated by Christ's redemption.

Parts I-IV covered Chapter 1, in which Pope John Paul appeals to The Beginning. Parts V-IX covered Chapter 2, in which the Holy Father appeals to The Heart. The next six parts will cover Chapter 3 in which he appeals to The Resurrection. Once again using Jesus' own words, John Paul explores the importance of the truth of the resurrection of the body to understand the Christian meaning of marriage and the renunciation of married life for the kingdom in heaven. "Jesus appeals to the resurrection thereby revealing a completely new dimension of the mystery of man." (*Theology of the Body* 64:1)

And Sadducees came to him who say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the wife, and raise up children for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no children; and the second took her and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; and the seven left no children. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife. (Mark 12:18-23)

Jesus was approached by the Sadducees with a question about the resurrection in which they did not believe. They intended to disprove the notion of resurrection of the body by pointing out how ludicrous it would be in the afterlife.

But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. (Matthew 22:29-33)

Pope John Paul observes that "Christ's answer is one of the key answers of the Gospel, in which...he reveals another dimension of the question, one that corresponds to the wisdom and power of God himself." (*TOB* 64:3) In His response, Jesus shows the Sadducees the truth of the resurrection from the Old Testament itself. They have missed the point because they have only read the scriptures...they do not "know" them. They have not encountered the mystery and power of God.

The Pope looks at “two essential elements: (1) the statement about the future resurrection of the body; (2) the statement about the state of the bodies of risen human beings.” (*TOB* 65:2) Firstly, the Sadducees not only don’t know what the Scripture is saying; they also don’t accept what has been revealed in Scripture. Jesus answers them by saying “that mere literal knowledge of Scripture is not enough.” (*TOB* 65:3) Scripture is the way to know the power of the God Who is revealing Himself in it. Jesus points out that the reality of God’s description of Himself is that He is God of the living and that this life will not end with death. God is the giver of life and is therefore not bound by the law of death.

Even though, through original sin, we have been separated from God, He still offers life to us. Because of Jesus, “access to the Tree of Life—according to the original plan of the God of the Covenant is revealed to every man in its definitive fulness. This will be the meaning of Christ’s death and resurrection; this will be the testimony of the Paschal Mystery.” (*TOB* 65:6)

Luke records Jesus’ comments on the difference between life now and after death.

And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Luke 20:34-36

After death, in the kingdom of heaven, after the resurrection of our bodies, we will not have husband or wife. Marriage belongs to our time on earth. Joining with a spouse and having children are not meant for our life after death—when we are with God.

John Paul addresses the second element in this exchange between Jesus and the Sadducees: the state of the bodies of risen human beings. “The resurrection...means not only the recovery of bodiliness and the reestablishment of human life in its integrity, through the union of body and soul, but also a wholly new state of human life itself.” (*TOB* 66:3) While in the resurrection, our bodies will still be either masculine or feminine, they “will be constituted and understood differently.” (*TOB* 66:4) On earth, as created by God in the beginning, masculinity and femininity signified marital union and the bringing forth of life. In heaven, this will no longer be necessary. In the afterlife Jesus says we will be like the angels in heaven. Of course, we do not become angels, assuming an angelic nature – they are pure spirits! We will retain our human bodies with our sexual differences but they will be spiritualized “according to a dimension that is different from that of earthly life.” (*TOB* 66:5) Different even from that possessed by Adam and Eve in the Beginning. Therefore, Pope John Paul says, “Resurrection means restoration to the true life of human bodiliness, which was subjected to death in its temporal phase.” (*TOB* 65:5)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XI

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part One Chapter Three

Spiritualization and Divination

Next John Paul focuses on the spiritualization of our human bodies. On earth we experience opposition between our bodies and our souls because of original sin. In the kingdom of heaven, this will not be our reality. “In the resurrection, the body will return to perfect unity and harmony with the spirit: man will no longer experience the opposition between what is spiritual and what is bodily in him.” (*TOB 67:1*) Our body and spirit will be perfectly in accord—even beyond the harmony that Adam and Eve experienced. This will be a “perfect spiritualization.” (*TOB 67:2*)

From Jesus’ words that in the after life we will be “sons of God,” the Pope draws the truth of our future “divinization...Participation in the divine nature...in the inner life of God himself and permeation of what is essentially human by what is essentially divine.” (*TOB 67:3*) The divinity of God will not absorb us into Him but will make our personal individuality “...emerge in an incomparably greater and fuller measure.” (*TOB 67:3*)

Jesus reveals that in the kingdom of heaven we will not take wife or husband—marriage and procreation belong to our earthly existence. This leads John Paul to explore the question of the possibility of “discovery of the spousal meaning of the body above all as the ‘virginal’ meaning of being male and female in the body.” (*TOB 67:5*) The answer to this question lies in the mystery of our face-to-Face meeting with God in the Beatific Vision. Therefore, marital union and love between husband and wife will be superseded in the next life by our union with and love of the Trinity. “As a consequence of the vision of God ‘face-to-face’ a love of such depth and power of concentration on God himself will be born in the person that completely *absorbs the person’s*” whole being! (*TOB 68:3*) Thus, the state of the body will be virginal—as Jesus indicated with his words “they will take neither wife nor husband.”

As Pope John Paul observes: The words Jesus spoke about our future resurrection are confirmed by His Resurrection! From the Beginning, we live the spousal meaning of the body in the marital union of husband and wife. In the resurrection of the body we will experience the fulfillment of the spousal meaning of the body in our face-to-Face union with our Living God. This is the future awaiting man, male and female, in the Communion of Saints. “That ‘spousal’ meaning of being a body will, therefore, be realized as a *meaning that is perfectly personal and communitarian at the same time.*” (*TOB 69:4*) This will be our response to God’s gift of Himself to us—our gift of ourselves to God. John Paul acknowledges that “it is difficult to construct a fully adequate image of the ‘future world’...with the help of Christ’s words at least a certain approximation to the image is possible and reachable.” (*TOB 69:7*)

The experience of living in the future world will be completely new—“yet, at the same time, it will not be alienated in any way from the experience man shared ‘from the beginning’ . . . man will find in this new experience of his own body the fulfillment of what he carried in himself.” (TOB 69:5)

Our Holy Father has discerned in light of the words of Jesus that “marriage and procreation do not definitively determine the original and fundamental meaning of being a body nor as being as a body, male and female.” (TOB 69:4) It is true for our life in this world in which marriage is a sign that points to our future union with God. With the resurrection, that function will end and will be consummated in the communion of persons in union with the Trinity!

Final Victory over Death

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust so are those who are of dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. 1 Corinthians 15:42-49

John Paul now turns to St. Paul to continue his teaching on the resurrection of the body. These words of St. Paul reflect his experience of the risen Christ, the foundation of his faith in the resurrection of the body. Paul knows that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. By His Resurrection, Jesus reveals that God is God of the living . Even though death entered the world through sin, through His Resurrection, Jesus defeated death. His victory is our victory.

John Paul notes that St. Paul also goes back to “the Beginning,” to Adam, the first man. Like Adam we experience our bodies as “weak,” “perishable,” and “natural.” Then St. Paul draws us to the last Adam, Christ, and our own personal experience of faith in His Resurrection, following “in the footsteps of [Paul’s] own post-paschal experience.” (TOB 70:6) The consequence of original sin is death. Our redemption in Christ is the way to our resurrection and victory over death. “The resurrection constitutes the definitive accomplishment of the resurrection of the body.” (TOB 70:8)

What awaits us in the resurrection? Our whole body, physical and spiritual will be imperishable, glorious, and full of power. “The humanity of the ‘first Adam,’ the ‘man of earth,’ carries within itself, I would say, *a particular potentiality* (which is capacity and readiness) *for receiving all that the ‘second Adam’ became*, the heavenly Man, namely Christ: what he became in his resurrection.” (TOB 71:3)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part One Chapter Three

Final Victory over Death (continued)

We inherited Adam's humanity and carry the potential fulfillment of incorruptibility by our redemption in Christ. John Paul explains that the body St. Paul means is the whole person, flesh and spirit, body and soul. In our humanity, each of us carries the image of Adam but we are called to also bear the image of the Risen One, Christ.

St. Paul uses several contrasts to describe the difference between our earthly bodies and our risen bodies. Now we have a weak, perishable body subject to death. When we share in the resurrection with Christ, we will have a "spiritual body" that is imperishable, glorious, and full of power. "*This spiritualization of the body will be the source of its power and imperishability (or immortality)*" (TOB 72:2)

Pope John Paul explains that while on earth our "natural body" is subject to sin which seeks to limit our ability to know the truth, to will the truth, and to love the truth. In the next life, we will attain to a "spiritual body" which will possess "*the perfect sensitivity of the senses, the perfect harmonization with the activity of the human spirit in truth and in freedom.*" (TOB 72:4)

Contenance for the Kingdom of Heaven

The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." But he said to them, "Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it." Matthew 19:10-12

The Pope, at this point, begins to reflect on the gift of oneself to God in celibacy and virginity (making oneself a eunuch) "for the kingdom of heaven." He has already explained the significance of Jesus' words that those in heaven take neither husband nor wife. In heaven, man, male and female, will live a full life of self-giving and communion without marriage. They will be in total communion with the living God. Thus, it is an anticipation of heavenly life to give oneself totally to God now through a life of celibacy or virginity.

John Paul discusses Jesus' reply to the disciples' observation that it's "better not to marry!" Jesus does not say "yes" or "no"—He doesn't put marriage in opposition to celibacy. Jesus also does not say anything negative about marriage. He pursues a different path by focusing on continence for the kingdom

of heaven “in view of the particular value which is connected with the choice and which one must discover and welcome as one’s own vocation.” (TOB 73:3)

The Pope observes that Jesus spoke of celibacy for the kingdom after speaking about the indissolubility of marriage to the Pharisees, not in connection with His discussion with the Sadducees on the resurrection of the body. Jesus also does not issue celibacy as a binding commandment but rather as a counsel for those able to receive it. In other words, to those to whom it has been granted. This charism is given to those who are called to live in anticipation of that future state when people “take neither wife nor husband.” John Paul stresses that this is continence for the kingdom not in the kingdom. “One must see in the vocation to such continence *a kind of exception to what is, by contrast, a general rule of this life.*” (TOB 73:5) That is, the vocation to marriage and procreation.

What Jesus is talking about—the vocations of celibacy and virginity—is a totally new concept for his hearers. This idea doesn’t exist in Jewish thought. Jesus conveys it using the word “eunuch.” He lists three categories. The first two are involuntary: those who are born physically incapable and those who have been rendered incapable of engaging in the procreative act of marriage. Jesus also creates a third category: those “who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven.” Our Holy Father explains that this category has a “*voluntary and supernatural nature*: voluntary, because those who belong to this category ‘made themselves eunuchs,’ and supernatural because they did it ‘for the kingdom of heaven.’” (TOB 74:1) For John Paul, these words of Jesus are a turning point for His followers.

For the Pope, celibacy and virginity “for the kingdom” in this life points to Jesus’ revelation about the “virginity” of risen man. The ultimate fulfillment of the spousal meaning of the body culminates in the glorified body in face-to-Face union with God himself. Living here and now in “earthly continence ‘for the kingdom of God’ is without a doubt a sign that *indicates* this truth and this reality.” (TOB 75:1) He reminds us that Jesus Himself made this choice of continence for the kingdom. Those who make that choice in this world follow Him and are living like Him.

John Paul relates that from the start, Jesus departed from Old Testament tradition. Mary’s virginal conception, Joseph’s virginal relationship with Mary, and Jesus’ virginal birth depart from the Jewish understanding of marriage and fruitfulness. Rather than fruitfulness of the flesh, the mystery of Jesus’ birth comes from the Holy Spirit’s fruitfulness. In fact, the marriage of Mary and Joseph, while being a “perfect communion of persons” is also “the mystery of this ‘*singular*’ *continence for the kingdom of heaven.*” (TOB 75:3) It is permeated with the fruitfulness of the Spirit.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XIII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part One Chapter Three

Contenance for the Kingdom of Heaven (Continued)

Our Holy Father is presenting his teaching about living a life of continence in this life for the sake of the kingdom in the next life. The fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit found in the life of Mary and Joseph is found in he who “freely chooses continence in the body, specifically, continence ‘for the kingdom of heaven.’” (TOB 75:3) John Paul observes that this understanding developed slowly in the Church. Knowledge of Jesus’ beginnings was not known to his followers when he spoke of continence for the kingdom. They only had the example of his life of celibacy for the kingdom.

For John Paul, since marriage has a “fundamental, universal, and ordinary value” for the kingdom of heaven, “then continence on its part possesses *a particular* and ‘*exceptional*’ value for this kingdom.” (TOB 76:2) Of course, that is continence chosen freely with the awareness that it is supernatural. Also, he reminds us of Jesus’ words “not all can understand it, but only those to whom it has been granted.” (Matthew 29:11) Here is the motivation for choosing continence: a supernatural understanding that one is following the example of Jesus and acting for the kingdom. John Paul asserts “not only that marriage helps us to understand continence for the kingdom of heaven, but also that continence itself throws a particular light on marriage viewed in the mystery of creation and redemption.” (TOB 76:6)

Contenance and Marriage

Both marriage and continence (celibacy or virginity) are proper for man, male and female. Contenance lived now reinforces that we are each alone before and with God. Going beyond the exclusive relationship of marriage, the person who chooses continence makes a sincere gift of himself to others, expanding the call to communion. On the flip side of the coin, as John Paul has shown, in marriage, a man and a woman become a reciprocal gift through physical union in their masculinity and femininity. This is how God created man, male and female, in the Beginning. The one who chooses continence renounces marriage and family. Christ “understands *the importance of this renunciation also in relation to the good* that marriage and the family constitute in themselves because of their divine institution.” (TOB 77:3)

John Paul observes that not choosing the good of spouse and family means self-sacrifice which will call forth continuing, voluntary self-sacrifice. Whether in continence or in marriage, our redemption in Christ calls us to overcome our lustful desires of the heart. (Recall the Pope’s teaching in Chapter Two of Theology of the Body on adultery in the heart from Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount.) Each person

accomplishes this “*by subordinating the sinfulness of his own humanity to the powers that flow from the mystery of the redemption of the body.*” (TOB 77:4)

For Pope John Paul in no way does Jesus imply inferiority of marriage—marriage is very good. Jesus extolls continence because it is chosen “for the kingdom”—for the future world. Jesus does not oppose marriage against continence because the two states complete each other in the Christian community. For those who live in the married state “continence ‘for the kingdom’ has a particular importance and particular eloquence.” (TOB 78:3) John Paul points out that the majority of people in the Christian community are married but that both states are based on love. The fruitfulness of the Spirit is given in the fatherhood and motherhood of both states; physically in marriage and spiritually in celibacy and virginity. The value of continence is that it anticipates heaven. Those living celibate or virginal lives are living here and now as we will be living in heaven upon our redemption.

Jesus calls us to the Kingdom He preached—a Kingdom that is established here and now yet only comes to fulfillment in the future world. Jesus calls some to continence now to work with Him in bringing about His Kingdom. Thus Jesus calls them to deny themselves, pick up their cross, and follow Him by renouncing the marital state and children of their own. However, John Paul reminds us that all—married or celibate—are included in this call to work in “the Lords’ vineyard” on earth and later in the “Father’s house” for eternity. (TOB 79:4)

However, our Holy Father stresses: “If someone chooses marriage, he must choose it exactly as it was instituted by the creator ‘from the beginning’; he must seek in it those values that correspond to the plan of God; if on the other hand someone decides to follow continence for the kingdom of heaven, he must seek in it the values proper to such a vocation. In other words, *he must act in conformity with his chosen vocation.*” (TOB 79:6)

John Paul sees love as the basis for the choice of vocation, even a vocation that renounces married love. The person to whom this self-giving love is directed is Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church; Jesus, Who has given Himself completely to us, especially in the Eucharist. Choosing to live a life of celibacy or virginity is an “act of a particular response to the love of the Divine Bridegroom, and therefore *acquired the meaning of an act of spousal love*; a gift of self, understood as a *renunciation* but realized above all *out of love.*” (TOB 79:9)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XIV

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part One Chapter Three

The Spousal Meaning of the Body as the Foundation of Christ's Call to Continence

Remember that in *Man and Woman He Created Them* Pope John Paul is developing a theology of the body. He is revealing God's plan for how we are to live as embodied souls and ensouled bodies, how to live with the result of original sin in our fallen world and actual sin of our own, how to live as redeemed people who look forward to an eternity with God in our resurrected bodies.

John Paul discussed Jesus' words to the Pharisees about the indissolubility and unity of marriage and then he related the words about continence for the kingdom which Jesus spoke shortly thereafter. For the Pope this reveals "*the profound truth about the spousal meaning of the human body* in its masculinity and femininity." (TOB 80:2) In light of this truth, man is a rational animal and therefore, sexual appetite doesn't exist purely on a natural level. This is an important distinction concerning continence "for the kingdom of heaven." This distinction is found in "*the awareness of the freedom of the gift...connected with the deep and mature consciousness of the spousal meaning of the body.*" (TOB 80:5)

This then motivates voluntary continence which is "for the kingdom of heaven." This gift of love is given totally to Christ rather than to a spouse. Both the choice for marriage or for continence is made with awareness of one's masculinity or femininity. John Paul stresses that the choice for "continence for the kingdom of God is made also in relation to the masculinity and femininity proper to the person who makes this choice." (TOB 80:7)

When Jesus speaks of those "who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven," He refers to a renunciation of marriage which is voluntary and conscious. This is possible only with an awareness of the value of marriage. In order for a person to choose continence with awareness, "he must also be fully aware of what he is renouncing." (TOB 81:2)

John Paul points out the paradox that the renunciation of marriage by the celibate or virgin is really an affirmation of the value of marriage. This is a sacrifice the person makes which brings forth the inner truth and beauty of marriage. If they weren't giving up a beautiful good, where is the sacrifice for the kingdom? "We do not forget that the one and only key for understanding the sacramentality of marriage is the spousal love of Christ for the Church." (TOB 81:4) Christ was a virgin and so was His Mother!

St. Paul's Understanding of the Relation Between Virginity and Marriage

In light of Pope John Paul's examination of Jesus' words on continence, he now moves on to St. Paul's understanding of marriage and virginity. While St. Paul builds on Jesus' teaching, he brings his own perspective based on questions from the Christians to whom he preached. Paul addresses this in a letter to the Corinthians, who were pagan converts. St. Paul is clarifying Jesus' brief teaching for those who are trying to live in light of that teaching. "Now concerning the unmarried, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy." (1 Corinthians 7:25) John Paul notes that like Jesus, St. Paul distinguishes between virginity as a counsel rather than a commandment. Because it is a counsel, St. Paul is counseling the Corinthians who are married, not yet married, or widowed.

If anyone thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin and if a critical moment has come and so it has to be, let him do as he wishes. He is committing no sin; let them get married. The one who stands firm in his resolve, however, who is not under compulsion but has power over his own will, and has made up his mind to keep his virgin, will be doing well. So then, the one who marries his virgin does well; the one who does not marry her will do better. 1 Corinthians 7:36-38

The Pope points out that we don't know who posed the question which St. Paul is responding to: a young unmarried man, a newlywed, a father. Like Jesus, St. Paul stresses that continence or virginity must be voluntary because "only *such* continence is *better than* marriage. The expressions 'does well' and 'does better' are in this context unambiguous." (TOB 82:5)

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek marriage. But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a girl marries she does not sin. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles and I would spare you that. 1 Corinthians 7:27-28

The point of this passage, according to John Paul, is that sin doesn't enter into marrying or not marrying at all. He distinguishes between two goods...choosing marriage "does well" while choosing voluntary continence or virginity "does better."

I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none...For the form of this world is passing away I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife and his interests are divided. 1 Corinthians 7:29-34a

John Paul reminds us that St. Paul is speaking from his personal experience as a celibate man. St. Paul is pointing out that the married state has its own difficulties! It is not all joy and happiness.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XV

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part One Chapter Three

The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. 1 Corinthians 7:32-34

St. Paul is pointing out that the married state has its own difficulties! It is not all joy and happiness; there are disappointments along the way. Besides this world is passing away! So St. Paul is pointing to that which is coming and lays his basis for teaching about continence for the kingdom--“the unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord.” Anxiousness is felt “only about what is truly close to his heart.” (*TOB* 83:7) For the celibate or the virgin, it is Jesus Christ and His Body, the Church. “To please God’...is a synonym of life in God’s grace and expresses the attitude of the one who seeks God, or who behaves according to his will so as to be pleasing to him.” (*TOB* 83:9) Love is what motivates the desire to please God. The married man loves his wife and seeks to please her. The celibate or virgin has no individual spouse to please, so that love is totally focused on pleasing God. Both are in accordance with God’s plan for the spousal nature of our bodies. Being “holy in body and spirit” is a state in which one belongs only to God. Thus, Pope John Paul points out “the sacredness of virginity or celibacy accepted for the ‘kingdom of God.’” (*TOB* 84:5)

John Paul moves on to St. Paul’s affirmation of marriage with the words “But each has his own gift from God, one in one way and another in another.” (1 Corinthians 7:7) Choosing marriage brings a gift of grace from God to live in the married state. The same is true of the person who chooses virginity or celibacy for the kingdom—the gift of a special grace from God to live out this vocation. John Paul wants us to remember that this world is not our destiny for eternity. The kingdom of God is where we want to live eternally. Marriage belongs to our life in this world. It does not carry on into the next. Jesus made this quite clear in his teaching on the resurrection of our bodies.

Even though we sin because of concupiscence and weakness we are, as St. Paul points out, temples of the Holy Spirit. Pope John Paul observes that whether in continence or marriage, the ‘gift’ is at work that each one receives from God, that is, grace which brings it about that the body is ‘*a temple of the Holy Spirit*’ and remains such *in virginity* (continence) *as well as in marriage*, if man remains faithful to his own gift, and in conformity to his state or vocation, does not ‘dishonor’ the temple of the Holy Spirit,’ which is his body.” *TOB* 85:4

Through this gift, each person is led into holiness.

Conclusion of Part One

This brings us to the end of Part I of Pope St. John Paul II's *Man and Woman He Created Them*, which contains Chapters 1-3. For Our Holy Father, "the redemption of the body according to Paul is an object of hope. This hope has been implanted in the human heart in some sense immediately after the first sin." (*TOB* 86:2) John Paul refers to the promise of salvation in Genesis 3:15. Just as man (male and female) was at the center of creation, we are at the center of salvation.

The Pope has been developing a theology of the body based on the appeals by Jesus to the Beginning, to the heart, and to the resurrection. "Christ speaks to man—and speaks about man, who is a 'body' and is created as male and female in the image and likeness of God; he speaks about man, whose heart is subjected to concupiscence; and, finally, about man, before whom the eschatological perspective of the resurrection of the body opens up." (*TOB* 86:4)

Jesus Christ speaks to us of hope. Our hope then is for victory over death and over sin. This hope is lived out each day as married couples maintain their indissoluble union and celibates live their vocation faithfully. "Christ's words which flow from the divine depth of the mystery of redemption, allow us to discover and strengthen the bond that exists between the dignity of the human being (of the man or the woman) and the spousal meaning of the body." (*TOB* 86:8)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XVI

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter One

This is a continuation of the series on Pope St. John Paul's *Man and Woman He Created Them*. Theology of the Body, as it is commonly called, is designed to help us understand God's original purpose for our physical bodies and how to move on past our fallen, sinful human nature to live liberated by Christ's redemption.

In Part I of *Man and Woman He Created Them*, John Paul appeals to "The Beginning" in Chapter 1 pointing out that from the beginning there was unity between the sexes who became one flesh. Conflict, tension, jealousy, division are not the norm but the result of sin. Jesus came to restore our fallen nature to God's original plan by His redemption. In Chapter 2 of Part I, the Holy Father appeals to "The Heart" as Jesus revises the understanding of and carrying out the moral law in the Old Testament, especially the teaching on adultery. In Part I, Chapter 3 he appeals to "The Resurrection," exploring the importance of the truth of the resurrection of the body to understand the Christian meaning of marriage and the renunciation of married life for the kingdom in heaven.

In Part II, "The Sacrament," Pope John Paul addresses the Sacrament of Matrimony. In Chapter 1: **The Dimension of Covenant and Grace**, our Holy Father begins his catechesis on the Sacrament of Marriage in Section 1 by reflecting on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 5 verses 21-33:

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one." This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The Pope enters into "a thorough and deep analysis" (*Theology of the Body* 87:2) of this passage in Ephesians which he feels crowns the previous treatment of Jesus' words about "The Beginning," "The

Heart,” and “The Resurrection.” St. Paul’s words are connected to John Paul’s Theology of the Body, because they refer both to the human body, male and female, in marriage and the Body of Christ, His Church. The Pope seeks to begin to answer the questions in what way and why these two meanings of body “appear and converge” (*TOB* 87:3) in this passage. He also will explore how “*the truth about the sacramentality of marriage*” (*TOB* 87:4) is revealed in this text.

A sacrament is the visible sign of an invisible reality. It goes deeper, because it effects or brings about the grace it signifies. The body, too, makes visible to the world the human person created in God’s image and likeness.

John Paul begins by looking at how Ephesians Chapter 5 fits in with the rest of Paul’s letter. St. Paul begins by “presenting *the eternal plan of man’s salvation in Jesus Christ.*” (*TOB* 88:1) St. Paul prays that all in the Church will know Christ as head of the Church and themselves. We sinners are called as Christians to new life in Christ. Ephesians then gives a detailed explanation of the “Christian life as a vocation flowing from the divine plan...from the mystery of Christ in the Church.” (*TOB* 88:2) That life calls for unity and growth in holiness and justice by growing in virtue and overcoming vice.

The beginning of Ephesians, Chapter 5, “severely condemns pagan abuses” and calls Christians to “live as children of light.” (*TOB* 88:3) Then St. Paul specifically addresses how to live in the family. He begins with: “Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21) Chapter 5 of Ephesians, according to Pope John Paul, joins together the two lines of thought permeating the letter:

The first is the mystery of Christ, which is realized in the Church as an expression of the divine plan for man’s salvation; the second is the Christian vocation as the model of life of baptized persons and particular communities, corresponding to the mystery of Christ or to the divine plan for the salvation of man. (*TOB* 88:3)

The last paragraph of Ephesians 5 deals with the relationship between husband and wife. The subsequent chapters of Ephesians deal with the relationships of children with parents and masters with slaves and servants. St. Paul concludes his letter with encouragement to spiritual battle. Ephesians 5:21-33, which John Paul is highlighting, “discusses the reciprocal duties of husbands and wives...focuses as such only *on the spouses and on marriage.*” (*TOB* 88:5)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XVII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter One

John Paul begins his teaching on Ephesians 5:21-33 with verse 21: “Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” The basis for this admonition is a reciprocal relation between husband and wife which springs from their relation with Christ. Our Holy Father explains fear as “reverence for holiness...*which springs from the profound consciousness of the mystery of Christ*” which “must constitute *the basis* of the reciprocal *relations between spouses.*” (TOB 89:1)

BECAUSE of the mystery of Christ in which we have become sons of God, spouses are led by reverence in their hearts to be subject to one another...mutual submission. This mutual submission is the key to understanding St. Paul's next statement: “Wives be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:22) Pope John Paul stresses that in no way does St. Paul mean any type of domination or power of the husband as master over the wife. Rather, it is in the wife's “relationship with Christ—who is for both spouses the one and only Lord—that the wife can and should find the motivation for the relationship with her husband, which flows from the very essence of marriage and the family.” (TOB 89:3)

This is not one-sided; recall Ephesians 5:21: spouses are subject to one another. Love is the source of this reciprocal submission of husband and wife. St. Paul focuses on this love when he speaks to Christian husbands: “And you, husband, love your wives.” (Ephesians 5:25) Pope John Paul comments that “with this way of expressing himself [Paul] takes away any fear that could have been created (given the contemporary sensibility) by the earlier sentence, ‘wives, be subject to your husbands.’” (TOB 89:4)

This is a love that excludes any type of submission as a servant or slave or a one-sided submission on the part of the wife. “Love makes the *husband simultaneously subject* to the wife, and *subject* in this *to the Lord himself*, as the wife is to the husband.” (TOB 89:4) Recall John Paul's earlier

discussion of man and woman's reciprocal gift of each other in marriage -- this is the mutual submission St. Paul refers to in Ephesians.

At this point, our Holy Father brings his discussion to the current day which has different customs, a different position and role of women, a different way of thinking. Yet, says the Pope, the underlying principle and fruit are the same. Reciprocal submission out of reverence to Christ "always forms the deep and firm supporting structure of the community of the spouses, in which the true 'communion of persons' is realized." (TOB 89:6) St. Paul reveals that this reciprocal spousal relationship is a dimension of the mystery of Christ and the "very essence of the vocation to marriage." (TOB 89::7)

St. Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians:

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body and is himself its Savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. (Ephesians 5:22-25)

Pope John Paul points out the great analogy found here. The first part of the analogy is that the wife is subject to her husband as to the Lord. The second part clarifies the first and gives the cause: the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church...therefore as the Church is subject to Christ so also wives should be subject to their husbands. Earlier in Ephesians, St. Paul had presented the relationship of Christ with the Church. Now Paul expresses that it is also a relationship of the Church with Christ. The third part of the analogy addresses the husband who is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her. What does this mean? "The reciprocal relationship between husband and wife should be understood by Christians *according to the image of the relationship between Christ and the Church.*" (TOB 89:8) From the Beginning, marriage has existed, created by God, to unite a man and a woman as husband and wife. As God's plan of salvation unfolded with His sending Jesus Christ, the mystery of the Body of Christ, the Church, joined to Christ the bridegroom revealed how marriage is to be lived out. Furthermore, the relationship between the Christian husband and wife lives out and reveals the reciprocal love between Christ the Bridegroom and the Church his Bride.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XVIII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter One

“Marriage corresponds to the vocation of Christians only when it mirrors the love that Christ, the Bridegroom, gives to the Church, His Bride, and which the Church seeks to give back to Christ in return.” (TOB 90:2) This love is God’s Love which seeks to redeem and save---given from eternity. This is the love which should be reflected by Christian spouses. Then “marriage becomes a *visible sign of the eternal divine mystery*, according to the image of the Church united with Christ.” (TOB 90:4)

Having pointed out the analogy of spousal relationship between Christ and the Church and husband and wife, Pope John Paul returns to the meaning of submission -- both reciprocal and the wife towards the husband. The submission St. Paul calls for is rooted in Christ’s relationship with the Church, as Head of His Body. In obedience to the Father, Christ made a total gift of Himself to His Bride, the Church...He died for Her. Christ then formed Her as His Body and is Her Head. The Church, on Her part, receives this total gift of Love given by Her Bridegroom Christ...His gift of salvation. Our Holy Father explains that Christ’s “*redeeming love* transforms itself...*into spousal love*; by giving himself for the Church, with the same redeeming act, Christ united himself once and for all with her as the Bridegroom to the Bride, as the husband with the wife, giving himself through all that is included once and for all in his ‘giving himself’ for the Church.” (TOB 90:6)

When God created marriage “in the beginning,” it was a foreshadowing of this very union between Christ the Bridegroom and His Bride, the Church. John Paul briefly brings to mind another of St. Paul’s analogies: Christ and the Church as Head and Body. “The union of body with the head is...of an organic nature...’the body has life from the head’ (even if at the same time, although in another way, the head has life from the body.)” (TOB 91:1) St. Paul brings this analogy into his analogy of marriage as

a spousal bond. St. Paul “speaks as if in marriage also the husband were ‘head of his wife’ and the wife ‘body of her husband,’ as if spouses also formed an organic union.” (*TOB* 91:2)

Pope John Paul recalls to mind Genesis and Adam and Eve being “one flesh.” Yes, “man and woman are two distinct personal subjects who make a conscious decision about their conjugal union.” (*TOB* 91:2) Yet they join together to become “in some sense a single subject” body and head through their reciprocal relationship. (*TOB* 91:3) Likewise, Christ is distinct from the Church, yet they are one in the Mystical Body of Christ the Head.

Pope John Paul again quotes directly from St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians:

And you, husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water accompanied by the word, so as to present his Church before himself all glorious, without spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind, but holy and immaculate. In the same way, husbands have the duty to love their wives as their own bodies, for the one who loves his wife loves himself. No one, in fact, ever hates his own flesh, but he nourishes and cares for it, as Christ does with the Church, because we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and unite with his wife, and the two will form one flesh. (Ephesians 5:25-31)

In this passage, St. Paul is speaking about how Christ expresses His love for the Church. John Paul states that St. Paul is also presenting “both this love and its expressions as the model the husband must follow in regard to his wife.” (*TOB* 91:6) Christ’s love for the Church desires Her sanctification. This begins with Baptism “with the washing of the water accompanied by the word.” (Ephesians 5:26) John Paul explains that every individual who “receives Baptism becomes a participant in [Christ’s] spousal love for the Church” and receives fundamental purification. (*TOB* 91:7) Christ frees the Church from the stain of sin making her “glorious without spot or wrinkle...holy and immaculate.” (Ephesians 5:27) Likewise “love binds the bridegroom (husband) to be concerned for the good of the bride (wife).” (*TOB* 92:4)

Ephesians continues with the husband’s duty to love his wife as his own body, a “unity through love” (*TOB* 92:5) St. Paul states: “The one who loves his wife loves himself.” (Ephesians 5:28) Pope John Paul observes that “in some sense, love makes the ‘I’ of another person one’s own ‘I;’ the wife’s ‘I’...becomes through love the husband’s ‘I.’” (*TOB* 92:6)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XIX

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter One

Pope John Paul continues commenting on Ephesians 5:25-31: In married love, the union of the husband and the wife expresses itself through the body. Although both are subject to each other, with the analogy of the head and the body, "...*the husband* is above all the one who loves and the wife by contrast, is *the one who is loved*." (TOB 92:6) Therefore, the wife submitting herself to her husband "means above all 'the experiencing of love.'" (TOB 92:6) That's how the Church submits to Christ, Her Head...in experiencing His love! The Church, as the object of Christ's redemptive love becomes His Body. As the object of her husband's spousal love, the wife becomes "one flesh" with him...even his own flesh. Accordingly, St. Paul ends his passage: "Therefore, also you, each one on his part, should love his wife as himself." (Ephesians 5:33) St. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:29: "For no man ever hates his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church." Pope St. John Paul sees a reference here to the Eucharist "with which Christ, in His spousal love 'feeds' the Church. (TOB 92:8)

At this point, St. Paul quotes Genesis 2:24: "For this reason, a man will leave his father and his mother and unite with his wife, and the two will form one flesh." For our Holy Father, this is the keystone of Ephesians 5:21-33 because it "presents the mystery of Christ with the Church from which [Paul] deduces the truth about the unity of the spouses." (TOB 93:1) This passage from Genesis provides the basis for St. Paul's analogies applied to the unity of Christ and His Church and of husband and wife. This analogy is rooted in God's plan of salvation.

Pope John Paul then comments on Ephesians 5:32: "This mystery is great; I say this with reference to Christ and His Church." This mystery is "first hidden in God's mind and later revealed in man's history...God's salvific plan for humanity." (TOB 93:2) St Paul connects the original marriage covenant given in the beginning with Christ's covenant with the Church He loves and gave Himself up for. Christ unites Himself with the Church in the way spouses unite in marriage.

John Paul poses the question: Can the “great mystery” be understood as a “sacrament”? He proposes that St. Paul “speaks *about the bases of the sacramentality* of the whole Christian life and in particular about the bases of the sacramentality of marriage” in an indirect yet fundamental way. (TOB 93:4) However, “sacrament” is not interchangeable with “mystery,” which is hidden in God. “The sacrament consists in ‘*manifesting*’ that *mystery in a sign* that serves not only to proclaim the mystery but also *to accomplish* it in man. (TOB 93:5) In speaking of “sacrament” Pope John Paul quotes from *Lumen Gentium*: “*The Church is in Christ like a sacrament* or a sign and instrument of intimate union with God.” (TOB 93:6) The Pope clarifies that this sense of “sacrament” is by way of analogy rather than in the sense of the seven Sacraments instituted by Christ and administered by the Church.

In Section 2 of Chapter 1, Pope John Paul focusses on Sacrament and Mystery. St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is written for baptized Christians. Paul refers to the mystery hidden in God...Christ is at the very center of that mystery. God has chosen us by His love to become adoptive sons through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus revealed the mystery to man by dying for us and redeeming us, forgiving our sins and giving us His grace. Therefore, St. Paul exhorts believers to live out this revelation. He instructs the Ephesians to live their Christian vocation morally, including as husbands and wives, in view of their redemption and Christ at work in them. In Baptism they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. In marriage, spouses should be examples of the unity and love which is found between Christ and His Church. “...not only the fruits of redemption are a gift, but above all Christ himself is a gift: he gives himself to the Church as to his Bride.” (TOB 94:5)

John Paul next reflects on the analogy of spousal love in the Old Testament. In several Old Testament books, God’s love for His Chosen People, Israel, is compared with the love of a husband/bridegroom for his wife/bride. Using this analogy, prophets like Isaiah “...explain the events that make up Israel’s history, by going back to the mystery hidden, as it were, in the very heart of God.” (TOB 95:2) This connects to St. Paul’s revealing the even greater depth of this mystery with Christ’s redemptive act in Ephesians.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XX

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter One

Pope John Paul has been commenting on the spousal analogy in the Old Testament. For our Holy Father, the emphasis is on the gift of God's love given to Israel and then to all mankind in His Son, Jesus Christ. St. Paul continues and transforms the analogy showing that "the first born Son and from all ages 'the beloved' of the Father reveals at the same time that his *saving love*, which consists in his gift of self for the Church, is *a spousal love by which he marries the Church* and makes her his own Body." (*TOB* 95:7) The mystery hidden in God is now "unveiled" while still remaining a mystery!

The analogy of marriage or spousal love between Christ and the Church is important because it helps us enter into the divine mystery in God and Christ's sacrifice for the Church. We cannot penetrate the mystery entirely, of course! But we can gain insight into the great love of God who gave Himself to man in His Son Jesus Christ. The analogy of spousal love applies to us in both communitarian and personal dimensions -- both as Church and as individual. As John Paul puts it: "The analogy of the love of spouses (or spousal love) seems *to emphasize* above all the *aspect of God's gift of himself* to man who is chosen 'from ages' in Christ. This Gift is total and irrevocable...a participation in the Divine Nature." (*TOB* 95b:4)

Additionally, applying the spousal analogy to God and Israel and Christ and the Church provides a way of understanding marriage. Pope John Paul enters into a consideration of marriage as a Sacrament in which spousal love makes visible the invisible mystery of God hidden from all ages. When the Son of God became man, Jesus made the invisible, unseen God visible. Comparing Christ and the Church with married spouses incorporates marriage into this action helping us "*understand the mystery of grace* as an eternal reality in God." (*TOB* 95b:5)

Recall that John Paul's thesis is that the body, in its masculinity and femininity, makes visible what is invisible, that is, the spiritual and the divine. God created the body to be a sign of the mystery

hidden in Him from eternity. (cf. *TOB* 19:4) From that thought, our Holy Father sees spousal love as a visible sign pointing to Christ's union with the Church. That makes marriage "the foundation of the whole sacramental order." (*TOB* 95b:7)

Earlier in *Theology of the Body*, John Paul spoke of marriage "in the Beginning" in considering Jesus' words to the Pharisees about divorce and the indissolubility of marriage. St. Paul also brings our attention to marriage in the beginning with his quote about Adam and Eve becoming "one flesh." For the Pope, marriage is a primordial sacrament created by God before the Fall when man was in the state of original innocence and justice in grace. God saw that man, male and female, were "very good." Before the Fall, before sin, "man carried in his soul the fruit of eternal election in Christ." (*TOB* 96:4) They were holy and immaculate, pure -- naked yet they did not feel shame. In Ephesians "we must deduce that the *reality of the creation of man*" permeated by the election in Christ, even after sin calls us "*to holiness through the grace of adoption as sons*" through the redemption of Jesus Christ. (*TOB* 96:4)

From the Beginning, marriage has been an integral part of the "sacrament of creation." (*TOB* 96:6) Marriage has "procreative power" proper to it which continues the work of creation. At the same time, marriage "*expresses the Creator's salvific initiative* which corresponds to man's eternal election." (*TOB* 96:7) For John Paul, marriage was instituted to procreate future generations and "spread the supernatural fruits of man's eternal election by the Father in the eternal Son." (*TOB* 96:7)

Marriage was created when man was in the state of original blessing in Eden. Even though with sin, marriage was distorted and darkened, it still contains the vestiges of the original sacrament in which God realizes His eternal plans of redemption and salvation. St. Paul confirms this in Ephesians 5:32 where he connects the great mystery of Christ and His Church with the passage from Genesis that the man and his wife become "one flesh." Now in Christ, Christian marriage is graced by His love for His Church in His gift of Himself -- redemption. The Pope sees the "sacrament of redemption as the definitive realization of the Mystery hidden from eternity in God." (*TOB* 97:3) Grace from this gives us forgiveness of sins.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXI

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter One

Flowing from Christ's spousal love, His redeeming love is forever in the Church's life. This is the Great Mystery: Christ unites Himself to the Church in an indissoluble love as husband and wife unite in marriage. The Church in turn completes this sacrament of redemption from which She draws "her whole spiritual fruitfulness and motherhood." (TOB 97:4) Just as the wife does from her husband in the Sacrament of Marriage. John Paul explains that "the sacramentality of marriage is... a *model and figure* of the sacrament of Christ and the Church and constitutes an essential part... of the sacrament of redemption with which the Church is endowed in Christ." (TOB 98:1)

Because marriage has been around since "The Beginning" it is a prototype of the Sacraments of the New Covenant. Recall that in His discussion with the Pharisees in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus confirms its existence. But marriage is also according to Pope John Paul "*an integral part of the new sacramental economy... that draws its origin from the sacrament of redemption.*" (TOB 98:3) This is true because the Sacrament of Marriage is now directed toward "man burdened by the heritage of original sin and the state of sinfulness... concupiscence." (TOB 98:4)

Recall John Paul's teaching earlier in *Theology of the Body* about adultery in the heart. This frames marriage with a moral exhortation for Christians to live out their election based on Christ and the Church. Before leaving his explication of Ephesians, John Paul observes that it "*confirms and deeply explains* the sacramentality of marriage." (TOB 99:3) Christian spouses are called by the great sacrament of Christ and the Church to live their marriage vocation on that foundation.

In Chapter 1, Section 3, Pope John Paul reflects on Sacrament and Redemption of the Body. In this Section, the Pope returns to the Gospel passages he analyzed earlier. "Christ *speaks these words, so to speak, from the divine depth of the 'redemption of the body.'*" (TOB 99:4) This is significant for man, who is body, male and female, and also for marriage as man and woman unite to form "one flesh." But also, the Pope adds for those who are called to continence for the Kingdom. The mystery of redemption, including the body, offers hope for the future and daily life.

John Paul reiterates Jesus' teaching to the Pharisees on the indissolubility of marriage: "what God has joined let man not separate." (Matthew 19:6) Divorce and remarriage results in adultery. Jesus brings this moral ethic into the redemption of the body. His words "...give an all-embracing answer to 'historical' man of all times and places, because they are decisive for marriage and for its indissolubility." (TOB 99:7) For Jesus, redemption means a "new creation" -- consequently, He goes back to The

Beginning in Genesis, ultimately to man's creation as male and female "in the image of God." John Paul reminds us that St. Paul in Ephesians also testifies to marriage...the "great mystery" of Christ and the Church.

Jesus presents marriage as the primordial sacrament on the basis of the mystery of redemption. In doing so, He "...opens marriage to the salvific action of God, *to the powers flowing 'from the redemption of the body,'* which help to overcome the consequences of sin and to build the unity of man and woman according to the Creator's eternal plan." (TOB 100:2)

The words of Jesus in Matthew and Mark on divorce, remarriage, and adultery establish what John Paul calls an "*ethos of redemption of the body...*the basis for understanding the particular dignity of the human body, which is rooted in the personal dignity of man and woman." (TOB 100:3) Redemption is both a grace and an ethos of morality given to man. (Ethos is the interior form of morality.)

Pope John Paul connects Jesus' teaching on divorce with His teaching on adultery in the Sermon on the Mount: "Whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28) Even though Jesus is not speaking about the Sacrament of Marriage in this passage, John Paul believes this cannot be separated from the marital covenant because it pertains to man and woman in their dignity as beings created in the image and likeness of God. This is a dignity "inherited despite sin, which is continuously 'assigned' to man as a task through the reality of redemption." (TOB 100:5)

Therefore, the dignity of every woman is assigned as a task to every man. Likewise, John Paul concludes every woman is assigned the dignity of every man as a task. Christ also assigns to each man and woman his or her own dignity in the sacredness of their person "...*specifically with respect to the person's femininity or masculinity with respect to the 'body.'*" (TOB 100:6) This, too, flows from the redemption of the body. Christ speaks from the depth of the divine mystery and penetrates into the depth of the human mystery. That's why he appeals to the heart, "...that 'intimate place' in which good and evil, sin and justice, concupiscence and holiness fight each other in man." (TOB 100:7)

The Sacrament of Marriage has been given to concupiscent people through the sacrament of redemption as grace and sign of God's covenant. It is also assigned to us as an ethos to our hearts, conscience and behavior. Because of our sinfulness, marriage "is a sacrament that arose from the mystery of the 'redemption of the body.'" (TOB 100:7) It comes from the spousal love of Christ and the Church as an expression of God's saving power. "As a sacramental *expression of that saving power, marriage is also an exhortation to gain mastery over concupiscence.*" (TOB 101:1) Unity and marital indissolubility are fruits of that mastery. Awareness of woman's and man's dignity flows into all reciprocal relations.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter One

Pope John Paul understands that as a sacrament of redemption, marriage is both a grace and an ethos. “Thus, based on the mystery of redemption, a particular “gift,” that is, grace, corresponds to marriage.” (*TOB* 101:2) Because of the gift unique to it, marriage also becomes an ethos or ethical order for the spouses to overcome “the disorder of the passions springing from concupiscence of the flesh.” (*TOB* 101:3) Pope John Paul observes that eros and ethos interpenetrate the heart of man and woman in their marital relations.

Marriage, as a Sacrament of the Church, is by its nature indissoluble as well as a word of the Spirit calling spouses to shape their lives together in chastity with strength from the redemption of the body. The Pope believes that “...*one can master the concupiscence of the flesh* as the source of the tendency toward an egotistical satisfaction.” (*TOB* 101:4) Then the flesh leads to a communion of persons which is indissoluble and lasting.

Spouses, in becoming “one flesh” are called by the Spirit to correspond to the gift they have received in the Sacrament of Marriage. For John Paul, life “...’according to the Spirit’ (or the grace of the sacrament of marriage) allows man and woman to find the true freedom of the gift together with the awareness of the spousal meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity.” (*TOB* 101:5) Life “according to the Spirit” is also open to the blessing of procreation when the spouses become “one flesh.” This brings about awareness of the gratuitous gift “...which corresponds to the dignity of the spouses themselves as parents, that...expresses itself *in the deep awareness of the gift of the life* to which both give rise.” (*TOB* 101:6)

This new life is a light of hope connected with the mystery of the redemption of the body. This hope comes from the Father...as marriage, the primordial sacrament, comes from the Father.

“Consequently, as a sacrament, marriage also constitutes the basis of hope for the person, for the man and the woman, for the parents and the children, for the human generations.” (TOB 101:7)

Recall John Paul’s earlier discussion on the resurrection of the body and Jesus’ words that “they take neither husband nor wife.” (Mark 12:25) Marriage belongs to the present, temporal world not the future eschatological reality. Yet each person who will participate in the resurrection of the body has his origin in the marriage of his parents in the world. While “marriage...does not belong to the ‘redemption of the body’ in the dimension of eschatological hope...sacramental marriage is *fulfilled* and realized in the perspective of the eschatological hope.” (TOB 101:10)

However, marriage has meaning and serves the purpose for man and woman who “by mastering concupiscence, does the will of the Father. And the one who ‘does the will of God will remain in eternity’ (1 John 2:17).” (TOB 101:10)

In concluding this Chapter, Pope John Paul returns to Ephesians 5:21-33. The great mystery St. Paul refers to is the union between Christ and His Church likened to the unity of spouses. This presents a presupposition of marriage in “The Beginning” as well as a rediscovering of marriage as the fruit of the spousal love which Christ has for the Church -- connecting it to the mystery of redemption. Husband and wife are called to model their relationship on Christ’s love for His Church -- His redemptive Love. Christ gave Himself for His Bride, the Church. “Through marriage as a sacrament...*both these dimensions of love, the spousal and the redemptive*, penetrate together with the grace of the sacrament into the life of the spouses.” (TOB 102:4)

In Ephesians 5:21-33, St. Paul speaks directly to husbands and wives but this extends even to men and women living lives of “continence for the Kingdom” as well as all humankind in general. The answer to the question about the “meaning of the human body, about the meaning of the masculinity and femininity of the human person” is Christ. (TOB 102:8)

Our communion with each other prepares us for “...the union of Christ with His Church.” (TOB 102:8)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXIII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Two

This is a continuation of the series on Pope St. John Paul's *Man and Woman He Created Them*.

Theology of the Body, as it is commonly called, is designed to help us understand God's original purpose for our physical bodies and how to move on past our fallen, sinful human nature to live liberated by Christ's redemption.

In Part I, "The Words of Christ," John Paul appeals to "The Beginning" in Chapter 1 pointing out that from the Beginning there was unity between the sexes who became one flesh. Conflict, tension, jealousy, division are not the norm but the result of sin. Jesus came to restore our fallen nature to God's original plan by His redemption. In Chapter 2 of Part I, the Holy Father appeals to "The Heart" as Jesus revises the understanding of and carrying out the moral law in the Old Testament, especially the teaching on adultery. In Part I, Chapter 3 he appeals to "The Resurrection," exploring the importance of the truth of the resurrection of the body to understand the Christian meaning of marriage and the renunciation of married life for the Kingdom.

In Part II, "The Sacrament," Pope John Paul addresses the Sacrament of Matrimony. In Chapter 1, our Holy Father presents his catechesis on the Sacrament of Marriage reflecting on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 5 in which St. Paul refers to "The Great Mystery" of the union between Christ and His Church which is likened to the unity of spouses and what this means for spouses living out the Sacrament.

In Part II, Chapter 2, "The Dimension of Sign," John Paul turns to an explanation of the marital promise between bride and bridegroom and how this applies the language of the body to the living out of the Sign of the Covenant. The Pope explores Old Testament prophets, the Song of Songs and the

marriage of Tobias and Sarah in Tobit to describe the fulfillment of becoming “one flesh.” This chapter explores the human dimension of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

1. Language of the Body and the Reality of the Sign

When an engaged couple celebrates the Sacrament of Marriage, their consent is at the center of the liturgy of Matrimony: “I _____ take you _____ as my husband/wife. I promise to be faithful to you always, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, and to love and honor you all the days of my life.” The man and the woman are the ministers...they administer the Sacrament to each other. The priest is the authorized witness, blessing and presiding over the liturgy. This is normally “a public act before society and the Church by which two persons, a man and a woman, become husband and wife, that is, the actual subject of the married vocation and life. (*Theology of the Body*, Paragraph 103:1)

These sacramental words spoken between the bride and groom expressing their readiness to become one flesh are just the beginning of the marriage ritual which is completed with the marital sexual act of the newly joined husband and wife. Through this sacramental sign, “the saving reality of grace and covenant is expressed and realized.” (*TOB* 103:3) However, it is integral to the sign that the man and the woman are conscious of the bodily correspondence linking the masculinity and femininity of the groom and bride. This language of the body speaks to the intention of marriage “in the Beginning” as becoming “one flesh.” This is accomplished by the gift of masculinity and femininity of the husband and wife in the conjugal union of their persons.

Throughout their married life...”all the days of my life” (until the death of one spouse)...the couple continually discover the spousal meaning of the body in their reciprocal gift for each other. This gift is visible and acts as a sign of God’s Covenant in Christ. Through this sign the couple receive the gift of grace. Therefore, John Paul observes, “in this way the family as the fundamental social cell is constituted.” (*TOB* 103:7) Throughout the living of married life through the years, the spouses convey the reality of the sacramental sign of marriage.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXIV

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Two

Pope John Paul next turns to an examination of the biblical tradition of the structure of marriage as a sacramental sign in the prophets of the Old Testament...Hosea, Ezekiel, and Isaiah. This analogy finds its ultimate expression in Ephesians in the New Covenant expressed as a marriage between Christ and the Church. The Pope calls this a “prophetism of the body” which signifies the “language of the body.”

These prophets portray the Covenant between Yahweh and Israel as a marriage. Because of this, marriage is understood as a covenant between husband and wife in the Old Testament. God chose Israel exclusively, and united Himself to His People with a deep, personal bond through love and grace. The prophets describe Israel as “Bride” and “Wife.” In other words, as a “person.” In relation to Israel, Yahweh is called the Bridegroom. Now the Covenant becomes spousal and breaking the Covenant means unfaithfulness and betrayal. Our Holy Father laments that this is “a blow that directly pierces [God’s] heart as Father, Bridegroom, and Lord. (*TOB* 104:3)

This analogy of the Covenant between God and Israel as a marriage reveals a deeper level, as John Paul sees it -- a language of the body in the subjective sense. Our bodies, through our masculinity and femininity, speak with the language of gift. This language can speak either of faithfulness and love...or unfaithfulness and adultery. For the Old Testament prophets, Israel’s turning to idolatry is identified as adultery and prostitution because of this analogy of the Covenant as a spousal bond.

Pope John Paul identifies man (male and female) as the author of the language of the human body since he cannot express this language without the body. God created man and woman from “the Beginning” so that “the deepest words of the spirit...words of love, gift, and faithfulness...call for an

appropriate ‘language of the body.’” (*TOB* 104:7) The Gospel applies this both to marriage and continence for the Kingdom.

The prophets acclaim faithfulness but unfaithfulness is denounced as adultery. These prophets proclaim that “the body tells the truth through faithfulness and conjugal love and, when it commits ‘adultery’ it tells a lie, it commits falsehood.” (*TOB* 104:8) Faithfulness agrees with the spousal meaning that corresponds to the masculinity and femininity of the body whereas unfaithfulness contradicts that meaning.

John Paul explains that upon giving their consent, the newly married couple now share in the ‘prophetism of the body’ spoken of by the Old Testament prophets. Thus the spouses re-read the meaning of the language of the body -- the spousal meaning that is deeply ingrained in the masculinity and femininity of the very person of the man and of the woman. They proclaim this truth as they live out their marriage commitment acting as a visible sign...a sacrament. They also then share in the prophetic mission of the Catholic Church. The Pope defines prophet as “one who expresses with human words the truth that comes from God, one who speaks this truth in the place of God in his name and in some sense with his authority.” (*TOB* 105:2)

John Paul stresses the importance of the conjugal consent of the spouses as they begin their marriage and throughout their married life. It is addressed by the man to the woman and by the woman to the man in interpersonal communion. This truth was given by God “in the Beginning” when He created man, male and female. Thus the language of the body expressed God’s truth in the visible sign of their marriage...a sacrament of the Church. Their mutual consent means that “both of the spouses *decide* to act in conformity with the language of the body, re-read in truth.” (*TOB* 105:5) Their intention, choice, and decision direct their behavior and actions to conform with this truth of being man and woman in their mutual physical marital relationship.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXV

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Two

Because the marital bond is one and indissoluble, the married couple fulfills the sacramental sign until death... "all the days of my life." This sacramental sign is linked with the conjugal actions of the communion of persons as the couple live the sign in their familial and marital relations. This ethos encompasses "*the procreative meaning of the body*, that is fatherhood and motherhood." (TOB 105:6) The language of consent and the language of the body spoken in marital intercourse must coincide in order to reflect the truth of the sign...sacrament...of the marriage. Pope John Paul affirms that in the "unique and unrepeatable expression of the covenant between 'this' man and 'this' woman in the sacrament of their vocation and their life we find expressed the foundation of the spousal love of Christ and the Church." (TOB 106:1)

At this point the Pope clarifies that obviously our bodies do not actually speak. This is an analogy. The actions of the body reflect the intentions of the husband and wife. As a married couple, the spouses are the authors of the language their bodies "speak" as they live out the sacramental sign of their married life. They must strive to give meaning to the language they portray stemming from the truth of the spousal meaning of the body. Then the couple continues to build and deepen their love, faithfulness, and marital integrity in their union which can only be ended with death.

Therefore, as the spouses re-read this meaning of the language of the body in truth, there must be a corresponding use of that language in their conjugal life. If the spouse "*gives to his behavior a meaning in conformity with the fundamental truth of the language of the body*, then *he too 'is in the truth.'*" In the opposite case, he commits lies and falsifies the language of the body." (TOB 106:3) To be true prophets, the spouses must correctly use this true language of the body when expressing spousal and procreative love.

Pope John Paul gently reminds us of concupiscence which is present in every man and woman. In marriage, the couple receives the grace of this Sacrament. The Pope reminds us of his reflections on Christ's words concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage and on his appeal to the human heart in the Sermon on the Mount which he discussed in earlier chapters. Jesus spoke about adultery of the heart. The man, male or female, who re-reads the language of the body in the conjugal covenant "*and then expresses it* not according to the needs proper to marriage as a covenant and sacrament, is naturally and morally the man of concupiscence: male and female." (TOB 107:1)

Recall that the Pope saw in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount that He called each person to a new reality through the mystery of redemption. So even though man, male and female, is concupiscent because of original sin, "despite the sacramental sign of marriage, despite conjugal consent and its realization, still he is at the same time *the man of the 'call.'*" (*TOB 107:2*) Through the sacramental sign of marriage, spouses can move away from errors and sin in re-reading the language of the body and into truth and virtue. At any time, they can turn away from sin and move toward marital chastity as they live their life together in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because of the redemption bought by Christ, spouses can re-read the language of the body in the truth created by God in the Beginning. Pope John Paul stresses that "in a real way...after having re-read the 'language of the body' in the truth, he is also capable of forming that language in the truth in the conjugal and familial communion of persons." (*TOB 107:4*) He assures us that while we are fallen we are simultaneously redeemed. Man and woman are individual subjects who are capable of self-determination. We may struggle with concupiscence, but we *are* able to discern truth from falsehood in the language of the body and then choose to act in accordance with true or false expressions of this language. John Paul insists that we are not completely subjected to lust because we are always "called."

2. The Song of Songs***

Once again Pope John Paul turns to Scripture to understand how the language of the body is lived out in the life of the married couple. He recommends that the Song of Songs should be seen as a song of human marital love...a love song sung by a Bridegroom and Bride to each other. The Bridegroom and Bride's words to each other are intertwined throughout the song. First, our Holy Father reflects on the Song of Songs showing how the Old Testament portrays human love expressed in the divine plan. John Paul offers a re-reading of the Song of Songs in light of the first chapters of Genesis...God's creation of human love in the Beginning. John Paul observes: "The Song of Songs is certainly found in the wake of that sacrament through which the 'language of the body,' the visible sign of man and woman's participation in the covenant of grace and love offered by God to man is constituted." (*TOB 108:3*) While the first expression of this love is found in Genesis 2:24: "and they became one flesh," the Song of Songs demonstrates the rich depths of the language of the body.

*** Before continuing, please consider reading through the Old Testament book The Song of Songs. (It is short...only 8 chapters!)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXVI

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Two

John Paul begins with a quote from the first verses of the Song of Songs for our consideration:

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!
For your love is better than wine...
Draw me after you, let us make haste...
We will exult and rejoice for you;
We will remember your tender caresses (Song 1:1-2,4)

The bridegroom and bride are entwined in words of love which express their inner hearts. John Paul here finds expression of “the ‘language of the body’ in which that *discovery* occurs *which the first man expressed* in front of her who had been created as ‘a help similar to himself’ ...and who had been drawn—as the Biblical text reports--from one of his ribs.” (TOB 108:4) Our Holy Father observes that the rib would indicate the heart!

In the Song of Songs, Pope John Paul sees the “richness of the language of human love” (TOB 108:5) which was only hinted at in Genesis 2 as Adam awakes and discovers Eve and the two become one. When the first man saw the first woman, newly created by God, he expressed “wonder and admiration, or better more, the sense of fascination.” (TOB 108:5) A similar fascination, wonder and admiration is woven from the beginning of the Song of Songs through each verse to the ending of the poem. This fascination is reciprocal: the bride’s femininity and the bridegroom’s masculinity.

Throughout the poem, the words of love spoken to each other focus on the body, “not only because in itself it constitutes the source of reciprocal fascination, but above all because *the attraction toward the other person*—toward the other ‘I,’ female or male, which in the inner impulse of the heart generates love—lingers directly and immediately on it.” (TOB 108:6) The bridegroom speaks to his bride: “O most beautiful among women” (Song 1:8) and echoing back to him the bride exclaims, “I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem.” (Song 1:5)

John Paul points out that while the metaphors used by the Song of Songs are not in tune with our modern life, i.e. shepherds, a royal bridegroom, their use shows that “the *‘language of the body’ seeks support and confirmation in the whole visible world.*” (TOB 108:8) The Pope wants us to observe that the most important aspect of re-reading the language of the body in the Song of Songs is the concentration of the bridegroom “on the whole female ‘I’ of the bride” (TOB 108:8) which speaks to him in all her feminine traits. The bridegroom’s words “full of poetic transport and of metaphors bears witness to the

experience of beauty, to a love filled with pleasure.” (TOB 108:8) When analogies ultimately fail to express his love, the bridegroom ends his song to his bride by addressing her directly, “you are all-beautiful, my friend, and there is no spot in you.” (Song 4:7) John Paul wants us to contemplate the Song of Songs as both sexual and sacred.

For our Holy Father, his analysis of the Song of Songs seeks to “understand more adequately and exhaustively the sacramental sign of marriage, which is a singular language of love generated by the heart, as the language of the body manifests it.” (TOB 109:1) So, next Pope John Paul considers the following words of the bridegroom addressed to his bride:

You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride,
You have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes
with one bead of your necklace,
How sweet are your caresses, my sister, my bride (Song 4:9-10)

The Pope notes that the bridegroom does not call her by her given name but as sister, bride, friend. These expressions say more. Because for John Paul it is of essential importance “to know *who the feminine ‘you’ is for the male ‘I’ and vice versa*” (TOB 109:3) for our understanding of the sacramental sign of marriage and the theology of the body. Calling his bride “friend” puts her “I” beside his own “I.” This is essential for love since “the love of friendship signifies in the Song a particular movement near each other, felt and experienced as an interiorly unifying power.” (TOB 109:4)

Our Holy Father also points out the eloquence of the bridegroom in calling his bride “my sister.” For him, “the expression ‘sister’ speaks of union in humanity...of feminine diversity and originality of the same humanity, not only with regard to sex [male and female], but to the very ways of ‘being a person’ ...both ‘being a subject’ and ‘being in relation.’” (TOB 109:4) The bridegroom sees the two of them as close as brother and sister, coming from the same family with common memories, from the same mother. John Paul observes: “The fact that they feel like brother and sister allows them to live their reciprocal closeness in security and to manifest it, finding support in this closeness” (TOB 110:1) As “brother,” the bridegroom embraces the entire “I” of his bride...body and soul in “disinterested tenderness.” In other words, the bridegroom is not lusting after his bride.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXVII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Two

John Paul next considers another theme in this loving duet between bridegroom and bride in the following verse spoken by the bridegroom:

A garden closed you are, my *sister*, bride
a garden closed, a fountain sealed (Song 4:12)

This metaphor reveals “the presence of another vision of the same feminine ‘I,’ master of its own mystery.” (*TOB* 110:7) Once again, John Paul addresses the personal dignity of the woman, “who as a spiritual subject, possesses herself and can decide...the essential truth and authenticity of the gift of self that tends toward the union” of being one flesh. (*TOB* 110:7) The language of the body re-read in this truth of a “garden closed” and a “fountain sealed” reveals the “inner inviolability of the person” as well as “the authentic depth of the reciprocal belonging of the spouses, who are conscious of belonging to each other, of being destined for each other: ‘My beloved is mine and I am his.’ (Song 2:16)” (*TOB* 110:8) These words of love are spoken by the bride and John Paul says these words mean that she entrusts herself to him affirming “the whole depth of trust that corresponds to the inner truth of the person...and the truth of personal dignity.” (*TOB* 110:9) This our Holy Father calls authentic love...God’s original plan for married love.

As the married couple lives the truth of this love, they increase their closeness as spouses. This closeness “develops in the subjective dimension ‘of the heart,’ of affection and sentiment, and this truth allows one to discover the other in oneself as a gift.” (*TOB* 111:1) The bridegroom more and more deeply experiences “the gift that is united on the part of the female

‘I’ [of his bride] with the spousal expression and meaning of the body... *the gift and the person’s self-gift.*” (TOB 111:4)

Pope John Paul continues his reflections focusing on the duet of the bridegroom and bride in the Song of Songs:

Bridegroom:

I said I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its clusters of dates
Oh, may your breasts be for me like clusters of grapes
And the scent of your breath like apples
Your palate is like exquisite wine that flows directly to my beloved,
And glides over lips and teeth.

His Bride responds:

I am my beloved’s and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go into the fields,...
Let us go out early in the morning to the vineyards...
There I will give you my caresses. (Song 7:10-13)

In commenting on this passage our Holy Father reminds us that the language of the body speaks to our senses! The love that unites the bride and groom is “of a spiritual and sensual nature together.” (TOB 111:5) The bride meets her bridegroom with the readiness of the gift of herself because she knows his desire is for her. Therefore, on the basis of their love, “the re-reading of the meaning of the body in the truth is achieved, because the man and the woman together must constitute the sign of the reciprocal gift of self which *sets the seal on their whole life.*” (TOB 111:5)

In the Song of Songs, John Paul sees “the peak of the declaration of love...and the final chords in the ‘language of the body’” (TOB 111:6) as the bride sings:

Set me as a seal upon your heart
as a seal upon your arm
for love is strong as death (Song 8:6)

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MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Two

When the “bride-sister, inviolate in the deepest experience of the man-bridegroom, herself master of the intimate mystery of her own femininity, asks ‘*set me as a seal upon your heart,*’ the whole delicate structure of spousal love *closes*, so to speak, in its own inner interpersonal circle.” (TOB 111:6) Here, for the Pope, is the visible sign of the Sacrament of Marriage lived in the truth of the spousal love between husband and wife.

Pope John Paul concludes his reflections on the Song of Songs by dealing with the subject of eros in this love song. The man and woman speak to each other in words full of longing and affection. Even as they discover each other more and become closer, “they ceaselessly continue to tend toward something...that goes beyond the transitory content of the moment.” (TOB 112:1) They are searching for perfection...”the synthesis of human beauty of soul and body.” (TOB 112:3) He observes that throughout the Song, human eros is always in search yet never satisfied. For example, when the bride laments:

I opened to my beloved
But my beloved had departed, he was gone.
My soul failed me, I missed him but I did not find him;
I called him, he did not answer me. (Song 5:6)

Two dimensions of eros--human love--are revealed in the Song of Songs. One dimension is of the “reciprocal faithful and exclusive belonging” (TOB 113:2) of marital love. The other dimension is a restlessness in the nature of eros that reveals “the need for [eros] to surpass itself.” (TOB 113:2)

At this point, Pope John Paul reminds us that in the dynamic of love there is “*the impossibility...of one person being appropriated and mastered by the other.*” (TOB 113:3) The bride and groom, as they re-read the language of the body in the “truth of the person and of love...arrive at the ever deeper conviction that the fullness of their belonging constitutes that reciprocal gift in which love is revealed ‘strong as death!’” (TOB 113:3) They are called “to reach what constitutes the very nucleus of the gift from person to person.” (TOB 113:3) What is this further truth of love that marital love searches for? The answer, in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, was given us by St. Paul.

Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not envious, does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude; it is not self-seeking; it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injuries, it does not rejoice in what is wrong but is well pleased in truth. It covers all, believes all, it hopes all, it endures all. Love will never end. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

John Paul concludes that eros—human marital love—points the spouses to the “love that speaks another language...which calls, invites to another Communion. *This love has been called ‘agape’* and agape brings eros to fulfillment while purifying it.” (TOB 113:5)

3. When the “Language of the Body” Becomes the Language of the Liturgy (Reflections on Tobit)

In the last section of Chapter 2, The Dimension of Sign, Pope John Paul reflects on the marriage of Tobias and Sarah in the Old Testament book of Tobit (chapters 5-9). The son of Tobit, Tobias, falls in love with Sarah. Sarah was unlucky in love! She has married seven times and on each wedding night before consummation of the marriage, a demon killed each husband! Sarah loves Tobias and is afraid to marry him and doom him to death. Fortunately, the angel Raphael has given Tobias the means to drive the demon away! On their wedding night after Tobias has defeated the demon, Tobias and Sarah pray:

Blessed are you, O God of our fathers,
and blessed for all generations is your name.
Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you for all ages.
You created Adam and you created his wife Eve
to be a help and support for him.
From the two of them the whole human race was born.
You said, “It is not good that the man should be alone;
Let us make him a help similar to himself.”
Now it is not out of lust that I take this sister of mine,
but with rightness of intention.
Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.
And they both said, “Amen, Amen” and went to bed for the night. (Tobit 8:5-9)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXIX

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Two

Pope John Paul, as on the Song of Songs, analyzes Tobit 8:5-9 in light of “how the sacramental sign of marriage is constituted on the basis of the ‘language of the body,’ which man and woman express in its proper truth.” (*TOB* 114:1) First, the Pope notes that in his prayer, Tobias refers to Sarah as “this sister of mine.” Our Holy Father points out that both biblical books indicate that “through marriage man and woman become brother and sister in a special way. The fraternal character seems to be rooted in spousal love.” (*TOB* 114:3)

In the Song of Songs, the bridegroom and bride declare that their love for each other is “strong as death.” (Song 8:6) Tobias actually has to face a life-or-death test to prove his love is “strong as death.” In fact Tobias declares that he loves Sarah “to the point of no longer being able to draw his heart away from her.” (Tobit 6:19) Tobias and Sarah together face the life-or-death test without hesitation. Our Holy Father observes that in this test “*life has the victory*, because during the test of the first wedding night, *love supported by prayer is revealed as stronger than death.*” (*TOB* 114:6)

John Paul notes that the spouses in the Song of Songs seem to live in an ideal world with no struggles between good and evil. Whereas Tobias and Sarah immediately face that challenge. For them, love places “itself between the forces of good and of evil...because love is confident in the victory of good and is ready to do everything in order that good may conquer.” (*TOB* 115:2) In the book of Tobit, rather than expressing the truth of the love of husband and wife in words, it is “by the choices and acts that take on the whole weight of human existence in the union of the two” that the love of the spouses is expressed. (*TOB* 115:3) They are victorious because they pray. The Pope states:

The prayer of Tobias and Sarah becomes in some way the deepest model of the liturgy, whose word is a word of power...drawn from...the covenant and grace. In this word of the liturgy, the sacramental sign of marriage is fulfilled, built in the unity of man and woman on the basis of the ‘language of the body’ re-read in the integral truth of the human being. (TOB 115:6)

Tobias and Sarah’s joint prayer is one of praise, thanksgiving, and petition. The bridegroom and bride pray in unison to the “God of our Fathers.” The Pope observes that in this

prayer the “‘language of the body’ becomes the language of the liturgy. Tobias and Sarah *speak the language of the ministers of the sacrament*, who are aware that in the conjugal covenant of man and woman—precisely through the ‘language of the body’—the mystery, which has its source in God himself is expressed and brought into being.” (*TOB* 116:4) As John Paul has said before, the marital covenant is the “primordial sacrament of the covenant of God with man, with the human race...the covenant that draws its origin from eternal love.” (*TOB* 116:4)

The prayer of Tobias and Sarah ends with “Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.” (*Tobit* 8:7) The spouses intend to remain in communion until death parts them. This is the vocation God has called them to and which is based on the truth of the language of the body. For Pope John Paul in both biblical books, “the ‘language of the body’ re-read both in the subjective dimension of the truth of human hearts and in the objective dimension of the truth of living in communion, *becomes the language of the liturgy.*” (*TOB* 116:5)

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Catholic liturgy “means the participation of the People of God in ‘the work of God.’” (*CCC*, par. 1069) Our redemption by Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection is **The** primary work of God to which the *Catechism* refers. Married couples participate in this work of God as they live out their conjugal life in faithful union in the Sacrament of Marriage. The *Catechism* also says that “the entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church.” (*CCC*, par. 1617) Married couples living out their union are visible signs of that spousal love between Christ and His Church.

As Pope John Paul brings Chapter 2 of Part II to a close, he returns to Ephesians 5, which “reveals the eternal sources of the covenant in the love of the Father and at the same time its new and definitive institution in Jesus Christ.” (*TOB* 117:1) This is why marriage is considered a sacrament by the followers of Christ as well as a sacramental sign.

Be subject to one another in fear of Christ. Husbands have the duty to love their wives *as their own bodies*, for the one who loves his wife loves himself. No one, in fact, ever hates his own flesh, but he nourishes and cares for it, as Christ does with the Church...therefore also you, each one on his part, should love his *wife as himself*, and the woman should have reverence toward her husband. (Ephesians 5:29, 33)

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Part Two Chapter Two

According to Pope John Paul, Ephesians 5 is the definitive expression of the objective confirmation of the language of the body re-read in the truth of love in the sign of the sacrament of matrimony. He also considers Ephesians 5 as a commentary on the words of Genesis 2:24: "The two will be one flesh," -- which expresses the sacramental sign of marriage. Our Holy Father remarks: "The 'language' of masculinity and femininity connected with the sign of 'unity of the flesh' must be understood *in a fully personalistic way*." (TOB 117:3) He recalls for us Ephesians 5:28: "Husbands have the duty to love their wives as their own bodies." The husband should love his wife like his own body, *but* her body is not his own body. Therefore, unity is achieved through love which takes the other as one's own "I." Since the body expresses the "I," it is through the body that the husband and wife join together and penetrate each other, ultimately belonging to each other spiritually.

John Paul asserts that Ephesians 5 is the foundation on which the sacramental sign of matrimony is built incorporating the language of the body into the language of the liturgy. In the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, the dimension of covenant and grace is evident in the richness and unique characteristic of the Church's liturgy. This liturgy derives from Ephesians, in part. Therefore "through the language of the body reread in...the truth of love, which is at the same time the integral truth of the persons-subjects [of] the sacramental sign of marriage, is built up in the language of the liturgy and in the whole liturgical ritual." (TOB 117:5)

The marital life of husband and wife should be formed by Ephesians 5 at the level of the communion of the two spouses. The couple lives this "through the covenant and grace that the liturgy proclaims and realizes in the sacrament." (TOB 117:6) That is, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies in reciprocal relations and shared life with their spouses reflecting the love of Christ with His Church. The Sacrament of Matrimony is usually celebrated within the Eucharist, the great Sacrament uniting Christ the Bridegroom with His Bride, the Church!!

Ephesians 5:32 speaks of marriage as a great mystery bringing a mystical dimension to the language of the body. While this great mystery primarily applies to Christ and His Church, St. Paul extends it to the sacramental sign of the marriage covenant between the husband and wife who are to be “subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Eph. 5:21) St. Paul “does not hesitate to extend *that mystical analogy to the ‘language of the body’* reread in the truth of spousal love and of the conjugal union of the two.” (TOB 117b:1)

John Paul tells us that the sacraments infuse holiness into our humanity penetrating deeply into our femininity and masculinity, our soul and body. This is expressed and realized in the language of the liturgy. It is the liturgy that elevates the spouses’ conjugal covenant to the dimension of mystery which is realized through the language of the body. The Sacrament of Marriage speaks of remaining together unto death while continuing to build up the marriage. The visible signs of the Sacrament of Matrimony are: love, faithfulness, conjugal integrity, unity, and indissolubility.

Therefore, the language of the liturgy becomes the language of the body as it signifies “a series of acts and tasks that form the ‘*spirituality*’ of marriage...in daily life.” (TOB 117b:3) In order to perform this spirituality in daily life, St. Paul writes that: “Husbands have the duty to love their wives as their own bodies (Eph. 5:28) and the woman should have reverence toward her husband (Eph. 5:33) and both, moreover, should be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Eph. 5:21). The Pope wants us to understand that the language of the body as a continuity of liturgical language expresses itself in the experience of sacredness “*infused* in masculinity and femininity itself through *the dimension of ‘mystery’*...whose roots plunge precisely into the ‘beginning’...the mystery of creation of man, male and female, in the image of God, called ‘from the Beginning’ to be the visible sign of God’s creative love.” (TOB 117b:3)

John Paul explains that the “fear of Christ” and “reverence” is a spiritual maturity that flows from the fear of the Lord -- one of the Holy Spirit’s sevenfold gifts. In Ephesians 5:21, spouses are called to submit to each other ‘in the fear of Christ’ and to stir their desire for reverence in conjugal relations. Therefore, the Pope concludes that Ephesians “highlights chastity as a virtue and as a gift.... In this way, *the reciprocal fascination* of masculinity and femininity *matures spiritually through the virtue* and even more so *through the gift* (life according to the Spirit!)” (TOB 117b:5)

To do this the spouses must turn away from concupiscence.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXI

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Three

This is the conclusion of the series on Pope St. John Paul's *Man and Woman He Created Them*. Theology of the Body, as it is commonly called, is designed to help us understand God's original purpose for our physical bodies and how to move on past our fallen, sinful human nature to live liberated by Christ's redemption.

In Part I, "The Words of Christ," John Paul appeals to "The Beginning" in Chapter 1 pointing out that from the Beginning there was unity between the sexes who became one flesh. Conflict, tension, jealousy, division are not the norm but the result of sin. Jesus came to restore our fallen nature to God's original plan by His redemption. In Chapter 2 of Part I, the Holy Father appeals to "The Heart" as Jesus revises the understanding of and carrying out the moral law in the Old Testament, especially the teaching on adultery in the Sermon on the Mount. In Part I, Chapter 3 he appeals to "The Resurrection," exploring the importance of the truth of the resurrection of the body to understand the Christian meaning of marriage and the renunciation of married life for the Kingdom.

In Part II, "The Sacrament," Pope John Paul addresses the Sacrament of Matrimony. In Chapter 1, our Holy Father presents his catechesis on the Sacrament of Marriage reflecting on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 5, in which St. Paul refers to "The Great Mystery" of the union between Christ and His Church which is likened to the unity of spouses and what this means for spouses living out the Sacrament. In Chapter 2, John Paul turns to an explanation of the marital promise between bride and bridegroom and how this applies the language of the body to the living out of the Sign of the Covenant. The Pope explores Old Testament prophets, the Song of Songs and the marriage of Tobias and Sarah in

Tobit to describe the fulfillment of becoming “one flesh,” applying them to the human dimension of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Chapter 3 of Part II, “He Gave Them the Law of Life as Their Inheritance,” concludes Pope John Paul’s meditations. He applies his Theology of the Body to marital morality in light of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (*Of Human Life*). His goal is to link the teaching on married life in *Humanae Vitae* with the Theology of the Body which he has been developing throughout this series. Our Holy Father intends to demonstrate how the Creator Father’s original divine Plan and Christ’s words about that Plan are elucidated in that papal pronouncement.

From the beginning of his meditations on the Theology of the Body, John Paul has sought to put forth for believers the language of the body in truth: How our Creator fashioned us to use our bodies in accordance with His will. In bringing all John Paul has written so far to bear on “re-reading” *Humanae Vitae*, he plunges right in with the following passage from that encyclical:

The Church...teaches that each and every marriage act must remain through itself open to the transmission of life. That teaching, often set forth by the magisterium, is founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between *the two meanings of the conjugal act*: the unitive and the procreative meaning.. By its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives, according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and woman.

(*Humanae Vitae* 11-12)

Pope John Paul zeroes in on the “two meanings of the conjugal act” and “inseparable connection” in this last chapter. He sees this text as definitely linked with Chapter 2, “Marriage in the Dimension of the Sacramental Sign” in his discourses. Recall that in the last chapter, the Pope based the Sign on re-reading the language of the body in truth. As the ministers of their marriage, husband and wife promise fidelity, love, and honor for life. As they live their married life, they are continually living that Sign through their marriage, especially when uniting in the marital act—becoming “one flesh.”

It is so important that in this moment of uniting, the couple act in the truth “*in conformity with the value and the moral norm.*” (*Theology of the Body* 118:4) The foundation of the moral norm is the nature of the act and of the man and woman participating in the act. They must be conscious of the relationship and unseparability of the two meanings of the conjugal act (unitive

and procreative). The Church has consistently taught what Pope Paul confirms in his encyclical: This norm is based in natural law—the inner workings of our human nature designed by God.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL’S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Three

For Pope John Paul, “the norm of *Humanae Vitae* concerns all men and women inasmuch as it is a norm of the natural law and is based on conformity with human reason (evidently when reason is seeking truth).” (*TOB* 119:5) Even though not expressly found in Scripture, the norm is found in Tradition and Magisterium teaching and corresponds to revealed teachings found in biblical sources, as can be seen in John Paul’s exegesis of Jesus’ teachings as unfolded in his Theology of the Body. In *Humanae Vitae* Pope Paul VI comments that “human beings of our day are particularly capable of seeing the deeply reasonable and human character of this fundamental principle.” (*HV* 12) Pope John Paul adds that the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* can also be grasped as in “conformity with all that is transmitted by the Tradition flowing from biblical sources.” (*TOB* 119:4) But more importantly, it is found in the moral order which God has revealed.

John Paul also points out that Pope Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* is in line with *Gaudium et Spes* issued at Vatican II, which spoke of the harmony that exists between human love and reverence for life. “The Church issues the reminder that a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to fostering authentic conjugal love.” (*Gaudium et Spes* 51) Likewise, *Humanae Vitae* posits that an inseparable connection exists between the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act.

Both these documents are pastoral as well as doctrinal. They seek to address questions that today’s men and women have about morality, especially spouses. For married Catholics, this involves the regulation of births which *Humanae Vitae* connects with observing God’s laws. John Paul observes “that the whole biblical background called ‘Theology of the Body’ offers us...the confirmation of the truth of the moral norm contained in *Humanae Vitae* and prepares us to consider the practical and pastoral aspects of the problem.” (*TOB* 120:6)

Pope John Paul has based his Theology of the Body presented so far on Christ's words as well as St. Paul's letters addressed to the early Christians. The Pope also defines pastoral concern as seeking the true good of man, male and female. This means putting God's plan for human love into practice – even if it involves sacrifice.

John Paul next speaks of responsible fatherhood and motherhood as addressed in *Gaudium et Spes* and *Humanae Vitae*. Specifically and foremost, “children of the Church *may not undertake methods of birth control* which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church.” (*Gaudium et Spes* 51) Additionally, married Catholics are to observe objective standards in their practice of conjugal love and the transmission of life based on human nature and mutual self-giving. Couples achieve this with Christian responsibility and reverence toward God. While a couple's decision involves their own and their children's welfare and material situation, it also concerns the interests of society and the Church. Responsible parenthood has a moral character and it rests on the parents acting in accordance with God using a conscience correctly formed by the Church's teaching. However, it is not the intent of the Church's teaching that married couples keep having as many children as they can.

Humanae Vitae does acknowledge that “responsible parenthood is exercised, either by the prudent and generous decision to raise a numerous family, or by the decision, made for serious reasons and with due respect for the moral law, to avoid for the time being or even for an indeterminate period, a new birth.” (*HV* 10) Their decision, however, must always be in conformity with God's intention as established in His objective moral order, especially the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act.

Pope John Paul in considering the Church's marital morality as faithfulness to God's divine plan, next differentiates between the morally correct and the morally illicit (not allowed) methods of regulating births in a marriage. Abortion, sterilization, and contraception are morally illicit since they either interrupt the process or render procreation impossible. Married couples are morally permitted to make use of the infertile periods in a woman's cycle.

Humanae Vitae states: “If, then there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife or from external circumstances, the Church teaches it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms...for the use of marriage in the infertile periods only, and in this way to regulate birth without

offending the moral principles.” (*HV* 16) This is in accordance with God’s moral norms, Who created us this way.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL’S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXIII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Three

The regulation of fertility using the natural disposition of the wife’s body is morally right. Whereas the use of means that impede the natural process – contraception – is never morally right. The intent of the couple avoiding children for plausible reasons does not render the method morally right or wrong. It is the process used – either in accordance with God’s divine plan for the marital act or against the very structure of the act using artificial contraception – that makes the first ethical and the second unethical.

For Pope John Paul, the normative dimension in the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* “is to specify and clarify the moral principles of action” while the pastoral dimension throws “light on the possibility of acting according to these principles.” (*TOB* 122:4) With God’s grace, married couples can act in accordance with these principles in light of the Theology of the Body which John Paul has brought forth from Scripture. As the Pope puts it: “the theology of the body is not merely a theory but rather a specific evangelical Christian pedagogy (teaching) of the body...a salvific message revealing *what man’s true good* is for...his life on earth in the perspective of the hope of the future world. (*TOB* 122:5)

John Paul continues by speaking of that which is indispensable for a human person: self-mastery. Today, people tend to view domination of the forces of nature, even in regulating births, as more important than mastery of one’s actions and passions. Self-mastery “corresponds in fact to the fundamental constitution of the person: it is a perfectly ‘natural’ method.” (*TOB* 123:1) Contrariwise artificial methods break this fundamental component of the person and makes him into an object to be manipulated. It is not just our physical bodies that are

sexual...sexuality is an expression of the whole person as seen in the language of the body, especially in reciprocal relations between husband and wife.

The truth of the Sacrament of Marriage must be expressed by the spouses' language of their bodies. Pope John Paul points out that "*Humanae Vitae* carries this truth about the human body in its masculinity and femininity to its final consequences" – logical, moral, practical, and pastoral. (TOB 123:2) This is the purpose of the natural law for man. Spouses are called by God as ministers of their Sacrament of Marriage to witness and interpret His eternal plan of Love in the sign of their union as one flesh. This union is more than a sexual reaction. On a deeper level it is a language of two persons subject to truth and objective moral norms who reciprocally "express *themselves* in the fullest and most profound way...of their masculinity and femininity ...the whole truth of their persons." (TOB 123:4)

The spouses give themselves to each other wholly in the freedom of the gift in truth. This truth in the marital act includes both love and fruitfulness: unitive and procreative dimensions. Artificial intervention deprives the conjugal act of its full meaning and truth. John Paul gravely states: "when the conjugal act is *deprived of its inner truth* because it is deprived artificially of its procreative capacity it also *ceases to be an act of love.*" (TOB 123:6) Physical union may occur but the act does not conform to the inner truth and communion of persons accorded by God's divine plan and that is what "constitutes the essential evil of the contraceptive act." (TOB 123:7)

Pope John Paul next turns to discussing the regulation of fertility emphasizing the virtues of self-mastery (continence) and responsible fatherhood and motherhood. *Humane Vitae* observes that convictions concerning the true values of life and family must underlie the practice of regulating births. This entails self-mastery over one's desires as the couple observes periodic abstinence from conjugal union. The purity of this practice gives a higher human value to the spouses' marital love, enriching its spiritual value. John Paul comments that "the ethically and upright regulation of fertility demands from the couple above all a certain *behavior and respect to the family and procreation.*" (TOB 124:3) This entails conjugal chastity and purity in a life lived according to the Spirit.

A married couple who respects the wife's natural rhythms and practices abstinence in accordance with them transforms their actions into virtuous behavior that is moral in nature. It is not viewed as a "technique." They show reverence for the order established by God who created

man, male and female, in this way. As *Humanae Vitae* expresses it, they “acknowledge oneself not to be the arbiter of the sources of human life but rather the minister of the plan established by the Creator” (*HV* 13)

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL’S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXIV

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Three

Above all, we must firmly acknowledge that all human life is sacred so there must be very serious reasons for a couple’s decision to space births: physical, psychological, or external. Once again Pope John Paul speaks of conjugal chastity in practicing periodic continence to regulate fertility from morally right reasons as the couple seeks to live by the Spirit. The “morally right reasons” must conform to the natural law or the order of nature expressed in God’s plan for the human person. Our Creator Lord is the source of this Law. By following this plan, the married couple’s actions correspond to the truth and dignity of the human person.

John Paul comments: “As a rational and free being, man [male and female] can and should reread with insight the biological rhythm that belongs to the natural order” and conform himself to it. (*TOB* 125:1) This is embedded in God’s plan from the beginning for human fruitfulness. This, Pope John Paul insists, is reading the language of the body in truth. The spouses called to communion as they become one flesh should employ both the outer expression and inner structures of their masculinity and femininity. Then the spouses ensure the integral truth of the language of their bodies in a mature way as they face the requirements of responsible motherhood and fatherhood.

However, our Holy Father warns that using infertile periods for marital union to avoid procreation without just reasons is abuse. Deciding on the just number of births is decided by not only the good of the individual family but also the good of society, the Church, and humanity. John Paul explains further that *Humanae Vitae* does not “aim one-sidedly at limiting, even less at excluding children, it means also the willingness to welcome a greater number of children.” (*TOB* 125:3)

Responsible fatherhood and motherhood require maturity. Approaching the use of infertile periods to space births as a method separated from the virtue of temperance and God's moral order reduces it to just another "method" among other "methods" -- natural and artificial contraception. The moral rightness of the natural method endorsed by the Church resides in its ethical dimension as an honorable practice of the regulation of births. Once again, self-mastery and continence are pointed out as discipline that "bestows upon family life fruits of serenity and peace,... favors attention to ones' partner, helps the spouses drive out selfishness,... deepens their sense of responsibility." (HV 21)

Continuing, Pope John Paul speaks of the Spirituality of the married life and vocation of parents and their family. *Humanae Vitae* acknowledges the demands of divine law for the married couple but also reminds us of the channels of grace available through the Sacraments. These "make man a new creature capable of corresponding with love and true freedom to the design of his Creator and Savior, and of finding the yoke of Christ to be sweet." (HV 25) A baptized couple joined by the Sacrament of Matrimony is consecrated and strengthened by the grace of that Sacrament to carry out their vocation -- even perfectly.

Spouses are called to make visible in their mutual love and cooperation with God's love, the author of human life, the holiness of His Divine Law. For this reason *Humanae Vitae* exposes the moral evil of contracepting the conjugal act and offers an honorable course for responsible parenthood in the regulation of fertility. John Paul observes that "*responsible fatherhood and motherhood understood integrally* are nothing other than an important *component of conjugal and familial spirituality as a whole*" which encompasses a married couple's proper vocation. (TOB 126:3)

Our Holy Father acknowledges the difficulties faced by Christian married couples striving to reach perfection in their vocation. For all believers, as Jesus declared, "The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life." (Matthew 7:14). Hope for that life provides light to the couple as they go through their days growing in their spirituality as spouses and parents. John Paul offers us encouragement: "the essential and fundamental power: *the love planted in the heart by the Holy Spirit.*" (TOB 126:5)

Through prayer, the Eucharist, and Penance, the spouses must implore God for the power to live up to their vocation. This "*spiritually creative 'power' of love* ... allows spouses to build up their whole life together *according to the 'truth of the sign'* by means of which marriage is

built up in its sacramental dignity.” (TOB 126:5) Love given to us is the power to participate in that Love with which God Himself loves in the mystery of His Creation and Redemption. This love rejoices in God’s truth and shares in the joy of God our Creator who announced in the beginning that all He created was “very good.”

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL’S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXV

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Three

Concupiscence seeks to detach our language of the body from truth and falsify it. But, by contrast, “the power of love strengthens it ever anew in that truth, so that the mystery of the redemption of the body can bear fruit in it.” (TOB 127:1) This power has a moral character which moves toward the good. Therefore it will safeguard God’s two intentions for the marital act: the union of the spouses in personal communion (unitive) and responsible parenthood (procreative) which are inseparable.

The power of love which has been poured out in hearts rightly unites these two meanings and excludes a contradiction that comes about and objects to the Church’s teaching against contraception. Pope John Paul (in agreement with Pope Paul VI) rejects the word “contradiction” and replaces it with “difficulty.” The “difficulty” is rooted in concupiscence particularly of the flesh which deforms the truth of the language of our bodies. Self-mastery overcomes concupiscence. Love “is by its nature *linked with chastity which, in turn, manifests itself as self-mastery or continence*: in particular as periodic continence.” (TOB 127:5)

For the Pope, St. Paul alludes to this as he calls spouses to “be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21) Only spouses who have achieved self-mastery can truly make a gift of themselves to the other -- otherwise the marital act becomes lust not love.

Next John Paul looks at conjugal chastity and speaks of the virtue of continence: a person’s “*ability to master, control, and orient the sexual drives* (concupiscence of the flesh)” (TOB 128:1) Self-mastery over one’s sexual drive and arousal entails progressive practice in controlling one’s will, sentiments, and emotions – starting with the simplest. John Paul believes

that continence comes from maturity in a disposition of the will in the practice of all the virtues especially prudence, justice, fortitude and particularly love.

Self-mastery is “the fundamental condition both for the reciprocal language of the body to remain in the truth and for the spouses to ‘be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.’ (Eph. 5:21)” (TOB 128:1) This is very important to understand the purpose behind periodic continence in marital relations. Abstinence during the fertile period not only involves resisting concupiscence of the flesh but “also opens itself to the deeper and more mature values” of the spousal meaning of the body in its femininity and masculinity and authentic freedom of the gift between spouses. (TOB 128:2) Concupiscence of the flesh with its focus on physical and sensual pleasure tends to blind us to deeper values that are part of love and the inner truth it contains.

In receiving the Sacrament of Matrimony, love is poured into the hearts of the couple through their consecration enabling conjugal chastity. St. Paul’s invitation in Ephesians to married spouses to “be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” opens up for the spouses a path “in which *both become ever more sensitive to the deeper and more mature values* connected with the spousal meaning of the body and the true freedom of the gift.” (TOB 128:3) Therefore, the spousal dialogue of the married couple is enriched, purified, and deepened.

Pope John Paul insists that there is no contradiction between the unitive and procreative meanings of the marital act. Although objections are raised “that, if it were not licit to separate them, the spouses would be deprived of the right to conjugal union when they cannot responsibly allow themselves to procreate.” (TOB 128:4) As pointed out in *Humanae Vitae*, rather than a contradiction there is only a difficulty which is linked with concupiscence which blinds couples to the true order of conjugal life and their interior commitment strengthened and consecrated by the Sacrament which joined them.

In reality, conjugal chastity brings a harmony between responsible parenthood and personal communion as continence matures. Then “*the conjugal act itself* acquires the importance and dignity proper to it in its potentially procreative meaning” and also serves “to express the personal communion of the spouses in proportion to the...richness of femininity and masculinity.” (TOB 128.5) Openness to the potential for procreation while expressing union in becoming one flesh reveals to the spouses the full manifestations of affection contained in the deep communion of their personal union. The couple will experience sexual desire and union as

God originally created it to be rather than only know lust that is the result of sin and concupiscence.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXVI

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Three

Pope John Paul continues connecting his teachings on the language of the body and Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*. Continence is basically a spiritual effort which expresses the language of the body not only in truth but also in a variety of manifestations of affection. The teachings of the Church confirmed in *Humanae Vitae* and *Theology of the Body* apply to conjugal spirituality which includes moral norms attached to responsible parenthood. To be responsible it must correspond to the personal dignity and truth of the spouses and their marital act. This means viewing the person as a subject rather than as an object to be manipulated and de-personalized. This means as well not reducing *Humanae Vitae* to a directive on natural rhythms of fertility but focusing on “*the very subjectivity* of the human person, to that personal ‘I’ through which the person is man or woman.” (*TOB* 129:3)

This also includes reactions connected with the person's masculinity or femininity which influences self-mastery, especially periodic continence. The two reactions are arousal and emotion, which are connected but differentiated. Arousal is physical and therefore sexual, but emotion “though it is stirred up by the reciprocal reaction of masculinity and femininity refers above all to the other person understood in his or her ‘wholeness’...in relation to his or her masculinity or femininity.” (*TOB* 129:4)

To connect arousal and emotion to continence, John Paul points out that the “negative” ability to abstain which is influenced by masculinity and femininity co-exists with the positive self-mastery which orients reactions. “Continence *has the essential task of maintaining the equilibrium* between the communion in which the spouses want to express reciprocally only their

intimate union and the communion in which they welcome responsible parenthood.” (TOB 129:6) The language of the body then expresses the orientation and character of their arousal and emotion.

Arousal is expressed in the conjugal act which is open to procreation. Emotion, however, comes from one spouse reacting to the beloved and does not “tend to the conjugal act but *limits itself to other ‘manifestations of affection’* in which the spousal meaning of the body expresses itself.” (TOB 129:6) Emotion does not include the potential of procreation. The consequences of these two reactions for responsible parenthood are of a moral nature.

Continence directs arousal in its correct development and emotion “toward the deepening and inner intensification of its ‘pure’...’disinterested’ character.” (TOB 130:1) Once again John Paul refers to Ephesians 5:21, “Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ,” as pertaining to the intimate union of the conjugal act which brings intensification of emotion and even deep emotional stirring by each spouse to the other. There is no room here for a selfish use of one’s spouse to release only arousal detached from the reciprocal self-giving of emotion.

To practice responsible parenthood, the virtue of continence maintains a balance between the unitive and procreative aspects of the marital act. The spousal meaning of the body oriented to the communion of persons in their masculinity and femininity is revealed by the practice of continence. It enables the married couple to develop a true personal communion in truth. This cannot be achieved with concupiscence which only considers biological laws and how to be “free” of them. Periodic continence, practiced as a virtue, helps the married couple create the freedom of the gift of self to the other. The spouses “direct sensual and emotive reactions in order to allow the *gift of self to the other ‘I’ on the basis of the mature possession of one’s own ‘I.’*” (TOB 130:4)

The Holy Spirit pours love into the hearts of the spouses consecrating them through the Sacrament of Marriage. This is an important element of conjugal spirituality. Along with love, conjugal chastity – living in the order of the heart through continence – permeates the inner order of married life. (Recall the Pope’s previous exegesis on the Sermon on the Mount in Part I, Chapter 2: purity of heart is the inner order of the conjugal life of the spouses.) John Paul states that “conjugal chastity is also confirmed as ‘life by the spirit’” lived under the “sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit and His particular gifts.” (TOB 131:1)

Our Holy Father explains further that St. Paul's exhortation to married couples to "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ" is connected to the gift of reverence – a gift of the Holy Spirit. The spouses' exercise of virtue joined to the gifts of the Holy Spirit effect order in their conjugal life. As the spouses mature they grow more in tune with the Holy Spirit working in their lives in love, chastity, and continence.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXVII

MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

Part Two Chapter Three

Marriage is a vocation of the human person. Only "through the powers that come from the...Holy Spirit, who purifies, enlivens, strengthens, and perfects the powers of the human spirit" can the two become one flesh on the level of persons. (*TOB* 131:3) To assist them the couple must persevere in prayer, Eucharist, and Penance.

Also, John Paul observes, spouses need the Holy Spirit's gift of reverence for the sacred because their vocation and shared life "carries *the sign of the mystery of creation and redemption.*" (*TOB* 131:4) In accordance with the beauty of God's creation, reverence opens the spouses to the two inseparable meanings of the marital act: unitive and procreative. They value God's original intention for sexual union which reveals the personal dignity of their masculinity and femininity inseparably connected with the personal dignity of the new life which potentially comes from their union. This inseparable connection was purposefully created by God!

Once again quoting from Ephesians, "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ," John Paul ties reverence for Creation to salvific fear: "the fear of violating or degrading what bears in itself the sign of the divine mystery of creation and redemption." (*TOB* 131:5) Salvific fear moves beyond continence as merely resisting concupiscence to veneration for the two meanings of marital union – unitive and procreative. Thus the couple live the inner truth of the language of the body as created by God. Then responsible parenthood, stemming from reverence, overcomes any contradictions or difficulties coming from periodic continence. The

Pope states: “The gift of reverence for the work of God helps at the deep level of principle to reconcile human dignity with the *‘natural rhythms of fertility.’*” (TOB 131:6)

Conjugal spirituality employs the Holy Spirit’s gifts of reverence, love, and chastity to recognize that the whole unitive marital act stemming from the spousal meaning of our bodies is linked with the procreative possibility. The spousal embrace, encompassing both unitive and procreative meanings, carries sacred dignity and grave responsibility. John Paul plainly states: “the antithesis of conjugal spirituality” is the use of “anti-conceptive practices” and the accompanying “mentality” that resorts to them. (TOB 132:2) They also bring great harm to the inner person and the conjugal act which has been stripped of God’s meaning and intention. Only by safeguarding the potential for conception can the truth of the language of the body and the dignity of the marital act be protected.

Responsible parenthood involves the consciousness and will of the spouses to accept the possibility of fatherhood and motherhood resulting from their marital union. This stems from reverence for the work of God which does not allow this great gift of participation in God’s creative work to become routine. “The spousal meaning of masculinity and femininity is fully manifested” through “veneration for the majesty of the Creator, the only and ultimate depository of the source of life, and for the spousal love of the Redeemer.” (TOB 132:3) Otherwise, concupiscence reduces one’s marital partner to an object of selfish enjoyment, withholding the freedom of the gift of one’s whole self.

The married couple’s mature understanding of the dignity of their masculinity and femininity and their reverence for God’s work is expressed every day in all their “affective manifestations” not just the marital act. It is the Holy Spirit who helps the couple as they express affective manifestations towards one another in response to the visible and invisible beauty of femininity and masculinity as created by God. Throughout their married life, the spouses continue to deepen their personal communion guided by the Spirit’s gift of reverence for God’s intention for marriage and the virtue of spousal charity.

In this last chapter, Pope John Paul’s intent was to develop for the faithful *Humanae Vitae*’s outline for conjugal spirituality and the inner harmony of marriage which respects the

unitive and procreative meanings of the conjugal act. This harmony reflects the spouses living the truth of the language of the body.

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE BODY: PART XXXVIII
MAN AND WOMAN HE CREATED THEM

CONCLUSION

Pope John Paul presented his Theology of the Body in 129 audiences spanning five years. In his final audience on November 28, 1984, our Holy Father summed up what he calls Human Love in the Divine Plan: The Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage. Throughout his discourses, he refers to this as a theology of the body.

In the first part, John Paul analyzed Jesus' words from certain Gospel passages:

- Jesus' appeal "to the Beginning" when speaking with the Pharisees about God's plan for the unity and indissolubility of marriage (Matthew 19:8)
- Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount about concupiscence as adultery committed in the heart (Matthew 5:28)
- Jesus' appeals to the resurrection of the body and life in the next world (Matthew 22:30)

In the second part, the Pope analyzed the Sacrament of Marriage using Ephesians 5:22-33 which speaks of the two becoming one flesh as a reflection of Christ and His Church. In reflecting on marriage as a Sacrament, John Paul focused on two dimensions: covenant and grace and the Sacrament as sign. These reflections involved consideration of marriage in light of Jesus' words and ended with an analysis of Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*. Pope John Paul intended to address questions raised by the Encyclical concerning conjugal and family morality.

Our Holy Father points out that since *Humanae Vitae* stirred up negative reactions, it is obvious that these questions are both important and difficult.

John Paul rooted his exploration of these concerns in Church teaching, Tradition, and Divine Revelation. His reflections are meant to help develop a theology of the human person to explain “*the biblical and personalistic aspects of the doctrine contained in Humanae Vitae.*” (TOB 133:2) The Pope wants us to understand that *Humanae Vitae*’s teaching flows from all the previous meditations in his Theology of the Body. The questions raised by *Humanae Vitae* must be faced and the answers found in the biblical and theological sphere he uses to teach about the redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage.

“It is in this sphere that one finds the answers to the perennial questions of the conscience of men and women and also to the difficult questions of our contemporary world concerning marriage and procreation.” (TOB 133:4)

Interested to learn more?

Theology of the Body for Beginners by Christopher West

Theology of the Body Explained: A Commentary by Christopher West

Man and Woman He Created Them by Pope St. John Paul II

Humanae Vitae by Pope St. Paul VI

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