

Le Nouvel Esprit:
A Video Series on the Theology of
the Body

TOB 56, General Audience of Feb. 11, 1981

General Remarks on Purity

- Purity connects the concepts of temperance (1 Thess. 4:3-5) with reverence (1 Cor. 12:18-25)
 - Reverence is a value response owed to the body
- Purity is a detachment from the fruit of concupiscence within the heart of man
- Purity is also the ability of man to center himself on the dignity of the body and the dignity of the person in relation to himself and others
 - This means that purity is a fruit of life according to the Holy Spirit
 - As a fruit, purity is a new ability as gift from the Holy Spirit
- Two dimensions of purity
 - Moral dimension as virtue
 - Charismatic dimension as gift of the Holy Spirit

Sin Against the Body

- 1 Cor. 6:18 teaches that fornication is a sin against one's own body
- Sinning against one's body is profaning the body, a deprivation of the reverence owed to it because of the dignity of the person
 - This profanation is due to the fact that the human body is a temple for the Holy Spirit
- Two dimensions to human dignity
 - 1) Metaphysical
 - 2) Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit is a further source of dignity of the body and a source for moral duty
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - This is a fruit of redemption accomplished by Christ
 - The body is no longer one's own

The Reality of Redemption

- The reality of redemption constitutes the source for this new dignity of the body by the Holy Spirit
- Through redemption each person receives their self and body anew from God
- Christ and his Incarnation made the redemption of the body a possible reality for man
 - Inscribed new dignity into the human body
 - Incarnation: the fact that God the Son was made flesh, the man Jesus Christ
 - This redemption of the body is bought at the price of God Himself, cf. 1 Cor. 6:20
- The fruit of this redemption is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - This entails the moral obligation to not commit unchastity, to not sin against one's body

Quote

- “For this reason, the fact that in Jesus Christ the human body became the body of the God-Man has the effect of a new supernatural elevation in every human being, which every Christian must take into account in his behavior toward “his own” body and obviously also toward another’s body: man toward woman and woman toward man. *The redemption of the body* brings with it the establishment in Christ and for Christ of a new *measure of the holiness of the body*” TOB 56:4, (p. 351)

Textual Analysis

- “If purity, according to Paul’s teaching, is an aspect of “life according to the Spirit,” this is to say that what bears fruit in it is the mystery of the redemption of the body as part of the mystery of Christ begun in the Incarnation and already by the Incarnation addressed to every human being. This mystery bears fruit also in purity, understood as a particular commitment based on ethics. The fact that we “were bought at a great price” (1 Cor 6:20), the price of Christ’s act of redemption, makes precisely a new special commitment spring forth, namely, the duty of “keeping one’s own body with holiness and reverence.” The awareness of the redemption of the body is at work in the human will in favor of abstaining from “unchastity”; in fact, it acts for the end of letting the person gain an appropriate ability or capacity called the virtue of purity.” TOB 56:5

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