

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

TOB 25, General Audience of Apr. 23, 1980

“You have heard...”

- Christ’s words “you have heard...” in Matt. 5:27-28 is an address to historical man
- Historical man
 - All of humanity have the same theological prehistory, meaning that all have inherited the meaning of the body from the “beginning”
 - Applies to all at the Sermon on the Mount with Jesus
 - Applies to all of humanity, past, present, and future
 - Refers to all of humanity inside the knowledge of good and evil
 - Refers to all of humanity, Christians and non-Christians through the 10 commandments and natural law, respectively

The Dimension of Heart

- Christ shifted the question of fulfilling the moral law to the inner dimension of man by referencing his heart
- Christ's words have both anthropological and ethical content
 - These two contents are linked together in the heart of man
 - The meaning of the body, including sex, body, spousal, generative, is linked to the inner dimension of man
- The Biblical meaning of heart, fn 40
 - In the New and Old Testaments, the heart represents the center of man, the source of his will, thoughts, emotions, affections, desires, and attitudes
 - “The heart... is the secret, inner root of man, and thus of his world... the unfathomable ground and living power of all existential experience and decision.” H. Schlier

Adultery and Desire

- Christ's use of the term "adultery"
 - Not used in its strict meaning of extramarital affairs, eg, a husband cheating on his wife by having sex with another woman
 - More generalized meaning as signifying the violation of the unity of the man and woman as a spouses in a one flesh union
- "Adultery in the heart"
 - This adultery is committed by looking at the woman in desire, which is an interior act
 - This is a desire to unite with her as a spouse without being her spouse
 - This desire is expressed through sight, by looking at the woman

More on Desire

- Christ does not specify whether the woman in Matt. 5:27-28 is married or not, his words apply to both cases
- Conformity of interior and exterior acts with ethics
 - Man as husband in looking and desiring his wife is not looking at the woman with adulterous desire if the conjugal act is legitimate
 - Interior act: man and woman desiring each other
 - Exterior act: the conjugal act
 - Ethics: done as husband and wife legitimately
 - Distinction: “desire” is used in two ways in this audience to refer to that which is in conformity and that which is not. Desire can be either good or bad
- Christ’s words apply to both men and women

Concluding Reflections

- Desire and look have their own theological content linked to the meaning of the body
 - This requires returning to the “beginning”
- Christ’s example here is not to be restricted to the particular example itself, but we must arrive at the full ethical and anthropological content to understand how Christ’s words are a fulfillment of the law
- Christ’s words here indicate the ability to derive truths about historical man and the meaning of the body

Vocabulary

- Intentionality: from phenomenology
 - Power particular to persons
 - Animals have instincts and drives, these are impressions they receive
 - Intentionality refers to the relation between an object and subject
 - Man is subject in that he is the subject of a relation to an object
 - When man thinks, he thinks of something; when he imagines, he imagines something; when he loves, he loves someone
 - Thinking, willing, and emotions in their deepest sense are intentional
 - Intentional here does not mean “on purpose”, for an object in the relation of intentionality need not be on purpose

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