

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

TOB 19, General Audience of Feb. 20, 1980

# Ethos of Gift

- Gen. 2:24 speaks of the creative perspective of human existence that is renewed in procreation
  - This perspective is rooted in human consciousness and the spousal meaning of the body
- The ethos of gift is perfectly manifested in original innocence
- In this ethos
  - Woman is not a mere object for man
  - The kind of nakedness which objectifies involves shame
  - No shame
    - Lack of objectification
    - Purity of heart made this impossible
    - United in consciousness of gift and the reality of each person as gift, willed by God for his and her own sake
- Subjectivity brings us to the objectivity of gift and is nourished by this objectivity

# Original Sin and Ethos of Gift

- Original sin is the loss of original innocence
- This means that the spousal meaning of the body ceases to a “simple reality of revelation and of grace”
- The spousal meaning of the body is now a task given to man
- This task is inscribed into the heart of man by the ethos of gift
- The inscription of ethos into the heart of man means that he can discover again for himself the spousal meaning of the body after original sin
- Man is hence called to become a guardian of the mystery of gift and subjectivity, to defend them from objectification

# Body as Sacrament

- Man bears within himself the inner dimension of gift, so his heart can express gift
- This inner dimension is a primordial sacrament
- Sacrament: “a sign that efficaciously transmits in the visible world the invisible mystery hidden in God from eternity.” TOB 19:4 (p. 203)
- The body and its sex is a sacrament, a visible sign of Divine Truth and Love
  - Man can really participate in the mystery of Love and Truth which began in original innocence through the body

## Quote

- “The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.” TOB 19:4 (p. 203)

# Body as Sacrament Continued

- Man being made in the image and likeness of God is a sacrament of creation
  - Through his body man is a visible sign of God
- Gen. 2:24-25 revealed that holiness has entered into the world together with man
- Original innocence is holiness itself through the sincere gift of self
- In his body, man senses himself as a subject of holiness

# First Marriage Feast

- Gen. 2:23-25 is the first feast of humanity
  - Original fullness of man's experience of the spousal meaning of the body, drawn from its origin in Divine Love and Truth in the mystery of creation
  - The economy of truth and love is revealed to be life and not death, that after original sin man is called glory and not death

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