

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

TOB 48, General Audience of Nov. 12, 1980

# The New Testament Ethos and Eros

- The New Testament ethos is a discovery of a new order of values
- We have the ethical task to continually rediscover the spousal meaning of the body and the truth of the dignity of gift within the erotic sphere
  - Failure in this task means that attraction turns into concupiscent desire
  - Concupiscent desire is not the full experience of eros
  - Eros “implies the upward impulse of the human spirit toward what is true, good, and beautiful, so that what is ‘erotic’ also becomes true, good, and beautiful.” TOB 48:1, (p. 319)

# The Problem of Erotic Spontaneity

- Claim: ethos takes away erotic spontaneity
  - This requires a detachment of ethos from eros
- JP II calls this approach mistaken and superficial
  - The acceptance of this view will never lead to the full dimension of eros
  - Matt. 5:27-28 demands a full and mature spontaneity
  - This mature spontaneity is the gradual fruit of discerning the impulse of the heart

# Mature Spontaneity

- The words of Christ demand a full and deep consciousness of one's own actions, especially his interior actions
- With this comes the discernment of the impulses of the heart, especially within the context of relationships with persons of the opposite sex
- Man has the duty to master the impulses of the heart and draw from these impulses what is consistent with the purity of heart
- Responding to the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount means
  - Learning the meaning of the body, masculinity and femininity
  - Discern what springs from attraction and from concupiscent desire
  - Discernment of erotic spontaneity
    - Must distinguish between sexual desire and noble pleasure
    - The sexual drive must be connected to noble pleasure
    - There is a distinction between sexual arousal and deep emotion

# Two Kinds of Spontaneity

Mature Spontaneity	Carnal Spontaneity
Fruit of New Testament Ethos	Derived from concupiscence
Mastery over impulses	Lacks mastery over impulses
Rediscovery of value	Cancellation of being able to experience value
Integration of the person, sexual drive, impulses are integrated with the values of the body, sex and person in correct ordering	Disintegration of the person, the sexual drive and impulses give preference and dominance to the sexual value over against the value of the person
The heart participates in this spontaneity	The heart is suffocated in this spontaneity by concupiscence

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