

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

TOB 15, General Audience of Jan. 16, 1980

# Review

- The revelation and original discovery of the spousal meaning of the body consists of
  - Presenting man as male and female in whole reality and truth
  - Full freedom from all constraint of body and sex
- The reality of the body from the beginning includes
  - Sex, masculinity and femininity
  - Fruitfulness and procreation
  - Spousal attribute, which is the power to express love
- Gaudium et Spes 24.3:
  - “Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one. . . as we are one” (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”

# The Gift of Self and Freedom

- In order to gift oneself, he or she must be free to do so
- This implies the concept of **self-mastery**, or self-dominion, i.e. self-rule
  - Self-mastery is indispensable in order to become a gift to another
  - Being naked without shame is the discovery of gift, the spousal meaning of the body, and freedom found in self-mastery
- Two concepts of interior freedom
  - 1) Freedom from sex and drive
  - 2) Freedom to give oneself as a gift
  - Both concepts imply that the first man and woman enjoyed the whole and self-evident truth of man revealed by God through the mystery of creation

# Spousal Meaning of the Body

- Two fundamental truths of Gaudium et Spes
  - 1) Man is the only creature God willed for his own sake
  - 2) Willed in this way, man can only find himself through the disinterested gift of self
- Spousal meaning of the body is inscribed into the original condition of the first man and woman, and original unity
- Freedom and gift allows man and woman to discover the truth of (2) and to live according to it
- Welcoming function
  - Man and woman welcome each other as willed by God for own sake

# The Meaning of the Body

- The body reveals masculinity and femininity, and value and beauty beyond the physical level of sexuality
- This value and beauty is the completion of the meaning of the body
  - Meaning:
    - 1) power to express love through which man becomes gift
    - 2) The power for affirmation, to live the fact that the other is willed for his or her own sake by God
  - Affirmation of the person
    - Welcoming the gift, which through reciprocity creates the communion of persons
    - Takes into account all of the body's exteriority, nakedness as masculine or feminine

## Two Quotes

- “On the one hand, this meaning points to a particular power to express the love in which man becomes a gift; what corresponds to this meaning, on the other hand, is power and deep availability for the “affirmation of the person,” that is, literally, the power to live the fact that the other—the woman for the man and the man for the woman—is through the body someone willed by the Creator “for his own sake”, that is, someone unique and unrepeatable, someone chosen by eternal Love.” TOB 15:4, (p. 188)
- “The revelation and discovery of the spousal meaning of the body explain man’s original happiness and, at the same time, they open the perspective of his own earthly history, in which he will never withdraw from this indispensable “theme” of his own existence.” TOB 15:5, (p. 189)

# Looking to the Future

- The beatifying function of the spousal meaning of the body differs in history than before original sin
- In history, the spousal meaning of the body is distorted, but continuity remains at the deepest level of man as being made in the image and likeness of God
- The consciousness of the spousal meaning of the body and gift constitutes the fundamental component of human existence in the world
- “Spousal” only has meaning within the realm of persons
- Celibacy as a vocation highlights these same truths about man

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