

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

TOB 41, General Audience of Sept. 24, 1980

The Man who Looks to Desire

- Two dimensions of intentionality
 - Intentionality of looking: concupiscent knowledge, psychological dimension
 - Intentionality of man's existence
 - Concupiscent knowledge determines the intentionality of existence
 - This is to say that concupiscence determines how man interacts with the other person, the woman, whether he treats her as an object or not
 - “He shows in this way who the woman ‘is’ at whom he ‘looks to desire,’ or rather who she ‘becomes’ for the man. Thus, the intentionality of knowledge determines and defines the intentionality of existence itself.” TOB 41:1, (p. 290)
 - In this sense, the woman is deprived of her dignity as a person and is treated as an object to be used for man's sexual gratification; this is how she stands in her existence “for” the man of concupiscence

Change in Intentionality for Existence

- This change in the intentionality for existence of the other person as an object for my gratification is not due to attraction
 - Note that in TOB 40 JP II makes a distinction between concupiscent desire and attraction, where attraction takes into account the dignity of the person and the sexual value of the body is properly integrated with the value of the human person
 - Two levels to this change
 - 1) Cognitive intentionality: woman is deprived of her attraction as a woman, seen as a possible object of his sexual gratification
 - 2) Enslavement of the heart occurs when the man wills this objectification
 - The heart's enslavement is proportional to the degree man's will is involved in objectifying the woman
 - Two levels of the will's involvement, a distinction JP II does not make here
 - 1) The wills sanctioning of this cognitive intentionality
 - 2) The acting out of an exterior act in conformity with the interior act of objectification

The Sexual Urge

- When concupiscence gains mastery over the will, then concupiscence dominates the subjectivity of the person
- The criticism of the objectification of people reduced to their sexual value alone does not call into question the sexual urge itself
 - The sexual urge itself has an objective role in procreation rooted in human nature
 - Rejects Manichaeism, see TOB 36 for our comments on this religion
 - What is at stake is living in a manner that the sexual urge can serve in the building up of the communion of persons
 - This proper living out of the sexual urge is its fundamental meaning

Concluding Remarks

- The damage of treating another person as an object for sexual gratification
 - Contrary to the communion of persons
 - Contrary to the conjugal unity of man and woman from the “beginning”
 - Contrary to the nature of attraction
 - Reduces it to the dimension of sexual value
 - Eliminates the personal meaning of attraction
- Concupiscence removes the intentional dimension of reciprocal existences from the perspective of communion and reduces attraction towards utilitarian, within which the other is treated as an object for sexual gratification

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