

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

TOB 47, General Audience of Nov. 5, 1980

Return to the Topic of Eros

- First introduced in TOB 22
- Eros has many meanings
 - Fn 56 gives a developed treatment of the Platonic conception of eros
 - Fn 57 references C.S. Lewis' The Four Loves
- Plato's meaning of eros
 - Eros is the inner power that draws man towards all that is true, good and beautiful
- The common meaning: attraction of a sensual nature, a reciprocal arousal ordered towards the conjugal union
- Question: How to understand eros in relation to the Bible

The Erotic

- Common language: concupiscence is psychological and sexological
 - Sexology: study of human sexual behavior
- The psychological/sexological interpretation of concupiscence is that it is a subjective intensity towards an object due to its sexual value
 - It has this intensity due to its mastery over man's emotive sphere and involves his bodiliness
- One way of thinking
 - The concupiscence desire in Matt. 5:27-28 within the psychological view is erotic phenomena
 - The erotic refers to all ways of acting and reciprocal behavior that are external manifestations of the interior act within the heart
 - The erotic hence refers to that which is derived from desire
 - Therefore Matt. 5:27-28 is a condemnation of the erotic and warning against it

A Second Way of Understanding the Erotic

- Platonic conception of eros is that power attracting man towards truth, beauty, and goodness
 - This conception gives an opening to New Testament ethos, the ethos of redemption
- The call to truth, beauty, and goodness means within the ethos of redemption the necessity of overcoming everything that is derived from the threefold concupiscence
 - At this level eros and ethos converge within the human heart
- The New Testament ethos
 - Is a prohibition to protect values, but this is not the entirety of the ethos
 - This ethos is about making values accessible and realizable by man if he learns to open his heart

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