

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

TOB 54, General Audience of Jan. 28, 1981

1 Thess. 4:3-5, 7-8

- “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity; that each one of you knows how to keep his own body with holiness and reverence, not as the object of lustful passions... For God did not call us to impurity but to sanctification. Therefore whoever rejects these norms rejects not a man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you”

The Meaning of Purity according to 1 Thess

- Purity is keeping the body with holiness and reverence
- Purity is therefore an ability, attitude, and virtue; an practical ability for living
- When man acts according to purity and abstains from impurity, this is because he knows how to keep his body
- Purity is rooted in the will
- St. Thomas Aquinas, purity is a power for mastering sense-desire, of holding back their impulses
 - Purity and chastity are discussed in his Summa Theologiae, II-II, Q151
 - Appetitus concupiscibilis, concupiscible appetite, see his Commentary on the Sentences, II.D21.Q1.A2.
 - We defined appetite in TOB 40
- Purity is part of the virtue of temperance
 - Cf. Summa Theologiae, II-II, Q151

St. Thomas Aquinas

- Doctor of the Church, one of the Church's most famous theologians and saints, 1225-1274
- Integrated Aristotle with Christian philosophy and theology
- Major works includes his *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa Contra Gentiles*
 - Also wrote commentaries on Scripture and some works of Aristotle
- Helped pave the way for several Church doctrines
 - Transubstantiation, Lateran IV
 - The relationship between the soul and the body, Council of Vienne
 - The relationship between faith and reason, Vatican I
- Where to read the *Summa Theologiae* free
 - <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/>
 - <https://aquinas.cc/la/en/~ST.I>

Temperance

- CCC 1809
 - “Temperance is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable. The temperate person directs the sensitive appetites toward what is good and maintains a healthy discretion: "Do not follow your inclination and strength, walking according to the desires of your heart." Temperance is often praised in the Old Testament: "Do not follow your base desires, but restrain your appetites." In the New Testament it is called "moderation" or "sobriety." We ought "to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world." ”
- Summa Theologiae, II-II, Q141, A3
 - “Temperance, which denotes a kind of moderation, is chiefly concerned with those passions that tend towards sensible goods, viz. desire and pleasure, and consequently with the sorrows that arise from the absence of those pleasures.”

Purity as a Virtue

- Virtue:
 - “A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.” CCC 1809
- Purity as a virtue is concerning with mastering and overcoming lustful passions
 - Negative meaning: abstinence
 - Positive meaning: keeping the body for holiness and reverence
 - This is connected to abstinence and gives it its value and meaning
 - Abstinence in essence requires the overcoming of something that spontaneously arises in him from inclination, attraction, and value within the sensual sphere

Purity as Reverence

- Purity is an ability of man's faculties and a manifestation of the life according to the Spirit
- Purity as reverence is born within man for everything bodily and sexual with regard to the self and to others
- Reverence is the most essential power for keeping the body with holiness
- Reverence is a spiritual power
- Introduction of 1. Cor. 12-18,22-25
 - This passage shows that the body is deserving of respect and so is connected to the text of 1 Thess. 4
 - Analogy between body and Church will give deeper insight into the theology of the body
 - To be discussed further in the next audience

Dietrich von Hildebrand on Reverence

- *The Art of Living*, Chapter 1
- Reverence is opposed to pride and concupiscence
 - Pride entails presumption, sham superiority, man the measure of everything
 - Concupiscence entails that nothing is of interest if it is not agreeable, brings satisfaction or is useful
- Reverence entails:
 - Not filling the world with his own ego, but leaving space for it to unfold itself
 - Understands the nobility and dignity of being and its value; value inherent within being
 - Autonomy of being as never a mere means for man's use
 - Understands that the world of being and God are both greater than himself
- “Reverence is the presupposition for every response to value, every abandonment to something important, and it is, at the same time, an essential element of such response to value. Each time one gives oneself to the good and beautiful, each time one conforms to the inner law of value, the basic attitude of reverence is implied.” p. 6-7

Dietrich von Hildebrand Quote

- “The basic attitude of reverence is the presupposition for every true love, above all, the love of neighbor, because it alone opens our eyes to the value of men as spiritual persons, and because, without this awareness, no love is possible. Reverence for the beloved one is also an essential element of love. To give attention to the specific meaning and value of his individuality, to display consideration toward him, instead of forcing our wishes on him, is part of reverence. It is from reverence that there flows the willingness of a lover to grant the beloved the spiritual “space” needed to freely express his own individuality. All these elements of every true love flow from reverence.” *The Art of Living*, p. 7

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