

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

TOB 43, General Audience of Oct. 8, 1980

# Resuming the Analysis of TOB 42

- Question: Can man look at his wife with desire and not commit the adultery of heart?
  - TOB 42 presented an argument that concluded man could look at his wife with desire
  - Key principle: understanding the desire of the heart depends upon the dignity of the human person
- Christ's statement in Matt. 5:27-28
  - Does not specify whether the woman man desires and commits the adultery in the heart is his wife or not, but simply a woman in general
  - This means that the adultery of the heart is not circumscribed by the adultery of the body
  - **Man commits the adultery of the heart**, not when he simply looks at a woman who is not his wife, but **whenever he looks at the woman with concupiscent desire**
  - This means that **man can commit adultery of the heart in reference to his wife** since he is looking at her with concupiscent desire, reducing her to an object for his sexual gratification

# Concupiscence

- Concupiscence changes the intentionality of the woman's existence for man, reducing her to an object for sexual pleasure
  - This eliminates the communion of persons and the spousal meaning of the body
  - The woman is now an object to appease the sexual urge
- Concupiscence deforms the reciprocal "for" each other, that dynamism of self-gift of each person to the other
  - This deformation strips the "for" of its communal meaning into a utilitarian ethos of mere use
- To look at the woman with concupiscent desire, without acting upon it, is still adultery of the heart because it is an interior action and disposition of reducing the woman into being a mere object

## Quote

- “Adultery ‘in the heart’ is not committed only because the man ‘looks’ in this way at a woman who is not his wife, but *precisely because he looks in this way at a woman. Even* if he were to look in this way at the woman who is his wife, he would commit the same adultery ‘in the heart.’ ” TOB 43:2, (p. 298)
- “A man can commit such adultery ‘in the heart’ even with his own wife, if he treats her only as an object for the satisfaction of drives.” TOB 43:3, (p. 299)

# Purity of Heart

- The dimension of interiority is required in order to understand how Christ came to fulfill the Law
- The 6th commandment
  - Is fulfilled by purity of heart
  - Has its right motive in the indissolubility of marriage
  - Adultery conflicts with this motive and commandment
  - Christ confirms the 6th commandment and anchors it in the depth of the human person
- This new ethos rooted in the depth of the heart is a liberation from concupiscence
  - Doing such allows one to live more fully in accordance with the heart
  - This leads to the freedom to live the gift and find oneself through self-giving
- The Sermon on the Mount is a call to rediscover that lost fullness of humanity and regain it
  - This fullness is found in the reciprocal gift of persons

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