

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

TOB 59, General Audience of Apr. 8, 1981

Introductory Remarks

- This audience concludes the reflections on the Sermon on the Mount, in particular, Matt. 5:27-28
- Christ's words are an appeal to the heart of all humanity
- The heart is the most essential guiding thread through history
- The history of good and evil began in Genesis
- This history is also a history of salvation

TOB as Pedagogy

- Christ's appeal is to construct a theology of the body
- This comes with a pedagogy
 - "Pedagogy seeks to educate man by setting the requirements before him, giving reasons for them, and indicating the ways that lead to their fulfillment." TOB 59:2, (p. 360)
 - Pedagogy, "the method and practice of teaching", Oxford Dictionary
- The Sermon on the Mount
 - Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount is also a pedagogy of the body
 - The teachings on the indissolubility of marriage and the moral demand to master concupiscence inform us that **the body is assigned as a task**

Science and Pedagogy

- Scripture informs us of anthropological truth, and this truth is the theology of the body
- The theology of the body is the basis for the pedagogy of the body
- Science does not develop the consciousness of the body as a sign and manifestation of the person
- Scientific, biological knowledge of the body presupposes a distinction between what is bodily and spiritual in man
 - A one-sided emphasis on science transforms the body into an object to be manipulated
 - The body as an object of manipulation means
 - One no longer identifies the self with their body, the body is not part of one's identity
 - The body is deprived of the meaning and dignity rooted in the fact that this body is proper to the person

Pedagogy as Spirituality of the Body

- The pedagogy of the body is a spirituality of the body, for the body is given as a task to the human spirit
- Through spiritual maturity, man discovers the spousal meaning of the body
- Biology and science can help man discover the spousal meaning of the body if they work in harmony with the spiritual maturity of the person
- This pedagogy as spirituality, the body as a task, and demand for a mature spirituality is the point of view with which we must understand recent Magisterial teachings
- The goal of this pedagogy is ensuring that affective manifestations and the conjugal act conform to the moral order and dignity of persons
- Task of this pedagogy is to create a culture for chastity

Church Document Quotes

- “It is not everywhere that the dignity of this institution (that is, of marriage and the family) shines with the same brightness, because it is obscured by polygamy, the plague of divorce, socalled free love, and other deformations. In addition, conjugal love is often profaned by egoism, hedonism, and illicit practices against generation” *Gaudium et Spes* 47, TOB 59:5
- “It is also to be feared that the man, growing used to the use of contraceptive practices, may finally lose reverence for woman and...may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion” Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* 17, TOB 59:5

Another Church Document Quote

- “Mastery over drives by one’s reason and free will undoubtedly requires asceticism (Paul VI uses this term) xvii so that the affective manifestations of conjugal life may be in accord with the right order, in particular with regard to observing periodic continence. Yet this discipline, which is proper to the purity of married couples, far from harming conjugal love, rather confers on it a higher human value. It demands continual effort (above, this effort was called asceticism) xviii yet, thanks to its beneficent influence, husband and wife develop their personalities integrally, enriching each other with spiritual values...It favors attention to one’s partner, helps both parties to drive out egoism, the enemy of true love, and deepens their sense of responsibility.” Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* 21, TOB 59:6

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