

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

TOB 14, General Audience of Jan. 9, 1980

Fundamental Question

- Did the first man in original solitude live according to gift?

Alone, Help, Gift

- The Biblical concepts of “help” and “alone” are key for understanding the essence of gift
- Gift reveals the very essence of person
- Man alone in original solitude, before the creation of woman, has not completely realized this essence
- The realization of the essence of person
 - Accomplished only by existing with and for a someone
 - The communion of persons is a relationship of reciprocal gift
 - This relationship fulfills original solitude

Beatifying Function of Gift

- Note: Beatifying does not mean beautifying, but describes a high state of happiness
- The fulfillment of original solitude in the communion of persons is beatifying, instills happiness
- When the first man stated “flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone”
 - He has the self-consciousness of being happy
 - Discovery of woman and the communion of persons, a help fit for him, beatified his existence
 - This is the first moment of joy of man’s joy
- This beatifying function of gift belongs to the mystery of creation

The Body and Gift

- “If we dealt with sex without the person, this would destroy the whole adequacy of the anthropology that we find in Genesis.” TOB 14:3, (p. 182)
- The body manifests the communion of persons, expressing masculinity to femininity and femininity to masculinity
 - This is expressed through gift
 - **Gift is the fundamental characteristic of personal existence**
- The body is a witness to creation as gift
 - This is a witness to the Gift-Giver, God, who is Love, the source of this gift
- Masculinity and femininity
 - The original sign of creative donation
 - Male and female become aware of the gift as something lived through masculinity and femininity

The Spousal Meaning of the Body

- The beatifying function of gift leads to the discovery of the meaning of the body as **spousal**
- Evidence is found in the conjunction of Gen. 2:23-25
 - Verse 23 revealed the joy and happiness over the creation of male and female, of the discovery of a fit helper
 - Verse 24 revealed the original unity as a communion of persons manifested in the conjugal act
 - Verse 25 revealed that the first man and woman were naked without shame
 - These facts together reveal the spousal meaning of the body
- We can answer the question posed at the beginning of the audience,
 - The first man and woman had the consciousness of this giving through the experience of becoming a reciprocal gift to each other
 - The fact they were naked without shame gives testimony to this consciousness

Further Reflections on Norm

- TOB 9 and 12 speak about an inalienable norm that is essentially personalistic
- Gen. 2:24 informs us that masculinity and femininity is ordered to an end in the life as spouses and parents
 - The one flesh union is an ordering of humanity under the blessing of fruitfulness
- Man enters into being as masculine and feminine with the consciousness that sex is ordered to an end
 - Their being naked without shame is evidence of this
- The awareness of his procreative power, the first man and woman recognize a freedom from the constraint of body and sex
- Original nakedness is a testimony to this interior freedom of the first man and woman
- Procreation is hence connected with the personhood of man

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