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**Presentation of the Theology of the Body
to Priests of the Diocese of Burlington, VT
Second Lecture**

Ten applications of the Theology of the Body to the Spiritual Life of a Priest

- 1) The priestly vocation is a vocation to love
 - a) Love is a gift of oneself, in imitation of Christ — “Love one another as I have loved you.”
 - b) Man is incomprehensible without love (RH 10).
 - c) Man cannot truly find himself without the sincere gift of himself to another in love (GS 24).
 - d) The priest must give of himself, must sacrifice.
 - e) We give of ourselves to God in celibacy for the Kingdom; it is a gift to Christ’s bride, laying down our life in Christ to make her holy.
 - f) We’re called to “introduce love into love,” but bringing agape into everything we do.
 - g) Human love is an analogy of divine love. Our love for our people should be an analogy of God’s love for them.
 - h) Without love, we have, gain and are nothing (1 Cor 13).

- 2) Our body, our whole existence, called to proclaim and live the Gospel
 - a) Our body is called to be a temple of the Holy Spirit
 - b) It is to be held in holiness and honor.
 - c) Given as a gift toward another.
 - d) We must care for our body. Some priests don’t take good physical care of their Churches. Likewise some priests don’t take good care of the Temples of the Holy Spirit entrusted to them.

- 3) Original Solitude
 - a) Original solitude allowed man to sense his dependency on God and on others. He was able to see how different he was from God and from animals.
 - b) Priests need this solitude with God to convince us of our dependency on God and others and our difference from God (we’re not God) and from others (ontologically).
 - c) This solitude, like original solitude, will energize us to rejoice in the gift of others, to know of our need for them, to love them.
 - d) God worked a new creation out of this original solitude and wants to do the same with us.

- 4) Priests are called to a Communion of Persons in Love
 - a) This communion is not just in this life, but in the next, in the *communio personarum* who is the Trinity and in the communion of persons which is the communion of saints.
 - b) “Koinonia.” 1 John — “So that you may have koinonia with God and with one another.”
 - c) We must be people of communion and instruments of God’s forming that communion in the Church, his family.
 - d) This is first intentional — we must want that communion. We need to pray for it, desire it.
 - e) But it must also be practical — we shouldn’t be loners. When we can’t be in the physical presence of another priest, there’s always the phone. A good use of our day off is to visit another priest.
 - f) Jesus prayed for this communion in the Last Supper, that we may be as one as in the Blessed Trinity.

- 5) The Goodness of our sexuality

- a) Our sexual drive is given to us to impel us toward others, in accordance with the nuptial meaning of the body.
 - b) Our sexual urge cannot be directed any way we want, but within it, we must be responsible to God and to others in accordance with who we are.
 - c) One key is not to repress it, but to use the energy to drive us toward the good, beautiful and true. This is the rehabilitation of eros, the “ethos” of eros, that JP II calls for. Eros for Plato was this drive toward the transcendentals.
 - d) “God pronounced it good!”
- 6) We have the heart of historical man
- a) Despite the ontological goodness of the sexual urge, we are subject to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.
 - b) Priests have always recognized this about themselves; after the scandals, our people now knows this too.
 - c) Porn has made lust so much easier to be fed, especially via the Internet.
 - d) We’re called to life according to the Spirit, not the flesh. Self-mastery. The Holy Spirit will help us to redeem the body, making it a temple again. Both God’s grace and our response, our effort, are needed.
 - e) Because of historical man’s heart, confession is crucial.
- 7) The eschatological value of our celibacy and personality
- a) Our whole life should say “sursum corda,” lift up your hearts, to seek the things that are above.
 - b) Celibacy is a gift...
 - c) ... for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.
 - d) If we’re not doing it for Christ and the Kingdom, our celibacy loses most of its value.
 - e) “This is my body, given for you”
- 8) Ecclesial sponsality
- a) Like Christ, priests are spoken for. We’re not bachelors.
 - b) This is important for priestly celibacy, that we sense that we’re already married. Otherwise we’re bigamists....
 - c) Our ecclesial sponsality is important for the all-male priesthood; we’re ordained in persona Christi sponsi.
 - d) We’re called to lay down our life to make our bride holy.
 - e) Reverence for Christ needs to be the basis of our relations.
 - f) The priest is called to be the icon of Christ’s spousal love — not just marriage is called to do this.
 - g) The Eucharist is the consummation of that union. Christ the bridegroom gives his body to his spouse and they become one flesh. We need to make that encounter as meaningful as possible for Christ’s flock, so that it really be an act of love, “not just ‘sex’”.
 - h) The sponsality of the priest is important for the heterosexuality of priest.
- 9) The Paternal meaning of our masculinity and priesthood
- a) God calls us in our masculinity to be priests.
 - b) Our paternal meaning must be exercised like that of St. Joseph.
 - c) Like St. Joseph, we often have people far holier than us in our parishes, but we’re called to impose a loving order.
 - d) The “headship” we live fights for towels, not chairs. But it imposes order all the same.
 - e) Our paternity provides for “children,” by nourishing them with the word of God and a moral example.
 - f) Our paternity protects and defends our children, especially against diabolicus incursus.

- g) St. Joseph didn't see obedience as a threat to his masculinity. He was a man under authority. We need to be as well, and that can smooth the paths quite a bit in helping others to accept authority.
- 10) Christocentrism of our teaching, particularly moral teaching
- a) JP II grounds the theology of the body on Christ's teachings and person and St. Paul's interpretations of them.
 - b) The more we live this life with Christ contagiously, with love, the easier it will be more our people to do so.

Ten applications of the theology of the Body in the pastoral work of the priest

- 1) The GOOD NEWS about sex, marriage and family
- a) Too often the Church's teaching has been defined by others, that the Church looks at sex as bad.
 - b) But those critics have it all wrong. The Church says "sex is far greater than the world thinks it is."
 - c) Sex is called to be an act of worship, one of the greatest expressions of love.
- 2) Promotion of periodic continence
- a) In some ways, the whole point of the theology of the body is to give a deeper anthropology to *Humanae Vitae*.
 - b) This is a great gift to couples.
 - c) Lowers divorce rate from 1/2 to 1/50.
 - d) Getting on plane with 50% or 2% chance of crashing.
 - e) NFP involves ethos, not just technique.
- 3) Children
- a) First commandment — "increase and multiply."
 - b) A child is the instantiation of parents' love, when they become one flesh.
 - c) This is the way to develop fully masculinity and femininity through their paternal and maternal meanings to the body.
 - d) We need to promote big families.
- 4) Unity in the Church's teaching
- a) We're called to be the echo of the Church's voice.
 - b) HV 28. Beloved priest sons, by vocation you are the counselors and spiritual guides of individual persons and of families. We now turn to you with confidence. Your first task--especially in the case of those who teach moral theology--is to expound the Church's teaching on marriage without ambiguity. Be the first to give, in the exercise of your ministry, the example of loyal internal and external obedience to the teaching authority of the Church. That obedience, as you know well, obliges not only because of the reasons adduced, but rather because of the light of the Holy Spirit, which is given in a particular way to the pastors of the Church in order that they may illustrate the truth.[39] You know, too, that it is of the utmost importance, for peace of consciences and for the unity of the Christian people, that in the field of morals as well as in that of dogma, all should attend to the magisterium of the Church, and all should speak the same language. Hence, with all our heart we renew to you the heartfelt plea of the great Apostle Paul: "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment." [40]
29. To diminish in no way the saving teaching of Christ constitutes an eminent form of charity for souls. But this must ever be accompanied by patience and goodness, such as the Lord himself gave example of in dealing with men. Having come not to condemn but

to save,[41] he was indeed intransigent with evil, but merciful towards individuals. In their difficulties, many married couples always find, in the words and in the heart of a priest, the echo of the voice and the love of the Redeemer. And then speak with confidence, beloved sons, fully convinced that the spirit of God, while He assists the magisterium in proposing doctrine, illumines internally the hearts of the faithful inviting them to give their assent. Teach married couples the indispensable way of prayer; prepare them to have recourse often and with faith to the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Penance, without ever allowing themselves to be discouraged by their own weakness.

c) John Paul II reiterated these truths in *Familiaris Consortio*.

5) Gay marriage

a) Rejection of the meaning of the body and the meaning of the person.

b) Jesus takes marriage back to the beginning

- God made them male and female
- Cling to wife
- One flesh in child
- What God has joined, man must not divide

c) The casualties of gay marriage will be:

- Transvaluation of the family
- Transvaluation of marriage
- Transvaluation of the meaning of masculinity and femininity, which is made to be expressed in complementarity toward each other.
- The spiritual consequence will be obscuring the Trinitarian image.

d) There are really only two boats in the water on the teaching of sexuality, the Church's and the gay right's movement.

6) St. Paul's inspiration on the disjunction between the flesh and the spirit

a) Our yes to God must bring a no with it to a life according to the flesh. This is primarily a yes to God.

b) We're preaching to a culture which is caught under concupiscence. We have to help liberate them.

c) This is most pastoral — just as it was for St. Paul.

7) Love versus using

a) This is particularly good with adolescents, who hate hypocrisy and using.

b) This distinction from L&R is easy to teach.

c) It's easy to branch to every sexual sin and show how it hurts individuals. It's not just about rules.

d) There's not a full gift unless one is married.

8) Looking at marriage more eschatologically

a) Marriage is a sacrament, meant to bring them to heaven

b) Communion of persons

c) Help children get to heaven as well. First duty.

d) Laying down life to make the other holy.

9) Looking at marriage more Christocentrically

a) "Out of reverence for Christ"

b) Christ is the reason

c) The nuptial meaning in its fullness

d) The Eucharist in the life of the couple

e) The spirituality of the couple

10) Body language

a) Shown particularly in little actions

b) 1 Cor 13 — love is patient, kind... Without love we have nothing.