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The Theology of the Body in the Life and Ministry of Priests
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Human Love in the Divine Plan: Overview and Introduction

- Introduction
 - Great to be here with you united in the presence and service of the Eternal High Priest.
 - I'm excited to have the chance with you, as we prepare for the canonization of Blessed John Paul II on April 27. John Paul II was very fond of using the expression "school" to refer to the various fonts where we can grow in faith. He spoke about the "school of the family," the school of the liturgy," "the school of Mary," and many other types of schools. Over the next couple of days, we are going to be entering together into the "priestly school of John Paul II," especially as we learn from him how to understand and apply his teachings on the theology of the body to our priestly life and ministry in imitation of him. I've been studying in this "papal priestly academy" since before I entered seminary and the more I study, the more I learn. John Paul II, in a sense, will be our mutual teacher during these days.
 - Before we get into the subject matter at hand, however, I would like to tackle something of the context. If one were to pay attention to the way the secular media and some Catholics have interpreted some of Pope Francis' words, it would seem that what we're going to be doing during this clergy convocation is borderline rebellious. After all, haven't we been told that Pope Francis in his interview with Fr. Spadaro told us that Catholic clergy and faithful should stop obsessing on issues regarding sexuality, abortion, gay marriage and contraception? Yet wouldn't dedicating nine conferences to John Paul II's theology of the body fit into the definition of an obsessive-compulsive concern about sexuality?
 - Such an understanding would show, however, a misunderstanding both of the Theology of the Body as well as what Pope Francis has been saying.
 - The theology of the body is, fundamentally, to a Christian theology of human sexuality but much more. It's an adequate theological anthropology of which only one of many applications is to the questions of marriage, family and celibacy.
 - Likewise what Pope Francis has never said that we should never be talking about these issues but, as he told Fr. Spadaro, that "when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context."
 - That context is the larger truths about Jesus. He has insisted elsewhere in the interview as well as in book length interviews prior to his election that that context is the fundamental kerygma about Jesus' loving and saving mercy. We must proclaim first, he said, "the good news of the kingdom and healing," not a "transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines [that] although relevant, on their own do not show the heart of the message of Jesus." Rather our preaching must focus first on the "essentials," the kerygma, the "proclamation of salvation" that "fascinates and attracts" and "makes the heart burn." Without the proclamation of the love of God, there's a risk that many will just assume that the Church's teachings in these areas are just a bunch of somewhat arbitrary rules that don't have anything to do with Jesus.
 - There's a reason why at the time of the new evangelization, we never go up to people at a dinner party and say, "My name's Fr. Roger Landry. You're not on the pill, are you?" There's something that has to come first. Especially for those who are not living in harmony with the teachings on human love as taught by Jesus and the Church, there is first a need for conversion. Unless they've received the message of who they are in God's eyes, unless they recognize that God loves them and that all parts of his revelation are part of that love, unless they've converted and are "turning with" Jesus, then it's going to be hard for them to

assimilate these teachings; unless they're unconverted, it's going to be hard to pluck out their eyes, cut off their hands, or end or change the dynamics of a relationship.

- In all of this, focusing on John Paul II's theology of the Body is not a violation of the way that the Spirit is leading the Church in the election and teaching of Pope Francis. It's actually part of what he's calling for. It's fundamentally kerygmatic, proclaiming, as we'll see, the salvation won for us by Jesus through the redemption of the body.
 - The TOB provides the context demanded by Pope Francis — the full and adequate understanding of the human person from God's perspective — to show that the Church's teachings are not a “disjointed multitude of doctrines” but in fact part of a whole message of who God is, who we are, and the path so that we might grow more and more into his likeness as a communion of persons in love.
 - The TOB is, moreover, one of the most important medicines that the wounded brought to the field hospital of the Church need. Among the deepest human, emotional and spiritual lesions come from the lack of being and feeling loved, from being used by others, from the broken hearts and broken families that result from bad choices. The reason why we need a field hospital in battle is because, frankly, there's a war going on, the same primordial war that has been waged against us from the beginning as the devil seeks to attack human love, to attack marriage, to attack the family. And we know the toll that this war has taken. Since the sexual revolution, the culture that trumpets the right to sex with whomever we want, whenever we want, wherever we want, however we want has contributed to the escalating problems of divorce, infidelity, sexually transmitted diseases, sex crimes, violence and trafficking, prostitution and pornography, sexual addictions, teenage pregnancies and abortions. The TOB not only provides many of the resources required for the field hospital but also some of the weapons to keep people from needing the field hospital.
 - Likewise, Pope Francis is calling the entire Church to imitate Jesus on the Road to Emmaus, accompanying people on their journey, even if initially it's away from Jerusalem and all Jerusalem stands for, to enter into their conversations with hearts on fire with faith and love, capable of warming their hearts and slowly and patiently demonstrating, as Jesus did with the two disciples, that the reasons for their wandering away from Jerusalem also bear the seeds of their eventual return. Many times people walk away from the Church, especially in the areas of sexual morality, because they think that the Church's whole approach is one big “thou shalt not,” that the Church's teachings are a type of asbestos that we try to wrap around the most passionate of human experiences, something as outdated as Victorian clothing. But whether they're conscious of it or not, deep down their restless hearts are searching for God in searching for love, they're searching for meaning and something lasting, and if we're able to help them to see that the Church's teachings correspond to rather than deny that longing, then we can help them turn back to Jerusalem and experience the joy of risen life with Jesus. The TOB helps to unpack these seeds of the return in their experience of wandering from Jerusalem. As so many young people have discovered, the TOB not only warms their hearts but can ignite them.
 - And so, to return to one last powerful image of Pope Francis, the TOB is one of the bridges for us to take to meet those on the peripheries of existence, because it is precisely over a misunderstanding of what people mistakenly believe the Church teachings, or a misunderstanding of the why behind the what of the Church teachings, that many people feel and often are alienated on the outskirts of life, including some of the people who come into our geography on the Lord's day. And so it's important for us to enter into this School of John Paul II so that, helped by him, we may be able to give the reason for the hope that is within us as we go out to warm hearts and bind wounds with the Gospel of Human Love in the Divine plan.
- The plan for the nine talks I've been asked to give will be to divide the TOB into different sections and in each section begin with what John Paul II teaches us in this school and then make some concrete applications of those insights to our priestly life and work. We'll have seven of these talks.

In our last time together tomorrow afternoon, we'll seek to apply all of this to a pedagogy to transmit this Gospel to others, most especially the young.

- What I'd like to do in this first talk, however, is try to orient us to the place of the TOB in John Paul II's whole thought on Christian holiness and mission, so that we can more easily make applications to the priestly life as we go along.
- I'd like to do so in four parts:
 - Identify the main thrust of his understanding and teaching of the faith.
 - Trace out where the TOB fits in that understanding and magisterium
 - Give a quick overview of his development of that main point in the structure of the TOB.
 - Finally, discuss a little how I came to discover the TOB and give a personal witness of what a difference it has made in my life, my priestly formation and my own priestly life and ministry.
- John Paul II, the Disciple
 - We begin with John Paul II himself.
 - Many during the course of his pontificate and since have failed to grasp what's most fundamental about John Paul II. Scores of journalists and several of his early biographers tried to understand him by focusing on all that he accomplished rather than the motivation that impelled him to do so much; they focused on the abundant fruit of his life and ministry rather than the tree and the sap that flowed within him. He once told George Weigel, who wrote the definite biography of him, *Witness of Hope*, that the problem with many of these biographers and reporters is "they try to understand me from outside. But I can only be understood from inside." Tad Szulc one of his biographers wrote several hundred pages on Pope John Paul II's exploits but, when it came to what drove him, he was basically able to write a mere sentence, chocking up everything to what he termed a vague "mysticism."
 - How do we understand him? The man who succeeded him and understood him so well summarized the life and papacy of Blessed John Paul II in the beautiful homily he gave at his funeral. He said that first and foremost Karol Wojtyla was a disciple of Jesus Christ. Everything in his life and pontificate can be synthesized by Christ's command to him, "Follow me!" "This lapidary saying of Christ," Benedict declared, "can be taken as the key to understanding the message which comes to us from the life of our late beloved Pope John Paul II."
 - The central aspect of John Paul II's life was that he was a disciple, a follower of Jesus Christ; everything flowed in his life from his relationship with Christ, his creator and redeemer, and that the program of his priestly, episcopal and papal ministry was to help the rest of us imitate him in this discipleship. This was for everyone, but it's particularly relevant for us priests. This is also the most effective way that we can enter his school, learn from him and imitate him. None of us will likely ever accomplish as much as he did on the historical stage, but John Paul II would be the first one to say that in his discipleship he is most certainly emulable. He'd be the first one to say, echoing St. Paul's words to the Corinthians, "Imitate me just as I imitate Christ," "Follow me, just as I follow Christ."
 - Centrality of Christ
 - John Paul II obtained a tremendous education and two doctorates, but the greatest theological school he ever attended, the deepest intellectual experience he ever had, was the Second Vatican Council, in which he participated as a bishop and archbishop from 1962-1965. He later called it the "seminary of the Holy Spirit" and a "unique occasion for listening to others and for creative thinking." Because he was one of the youngest bishops in the world when it began, he did more listening than speaking at the beginning, but by the end of the Council, he, a fast learner, was clearly one of the intellectual leaders.
 - To understand the man who became Pope John Paul II from the inside involves climbing into his head during this very important formational experience.
 - I actually had the chance to do this. As George Weigel was doing his research on *Witness to Hope* at the North American College where I was a seminarian, he asked me to translate for

him all of the Bishop Wojtyla's written or oral interventions at the Second Vatican Council. It was a great assignment to put my words into the future pope's mouth!

- In preparation for Vatican II, Bishop Wojtyla wrote a document for the ante-preparatory commission that said that the biggest issue facing the Church was not reforming its own house but to give an adequate response to the yearnings, questions and provisional answers of the human person today. In the chaos that was coming from all of the "isms" of the 20th century — not just Nazism and Communism, but materialism, hedonism, individualism, relativism, atheism — modern man wanted to know whether Christian humanism was different from all the other humanisms out there, whether it had a real answer to the problem of modern despair. Everything in the Council, he said, should be organized according to this framework. He didn't persuade those in charge of the Council to accept his ideas *in toto*, but he remained convinced throughout the Council and beyond that the Church needed an adequate anthropology, an adequate understanding of the human person, to propose to the Augustines of the modern world, who like St. Augustine 16 centuries before, were seeking to find peace for their restless hearts in all types of false answers. Wojtyla knew their hearts would only be able to find rest in God.
- While he didn't get the whole Council framed according to this schema, in the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, which was dedicated to the Church's positive articulation of the Gospel in response to modern anxieties, now-Archbishop Wojtyla played an enormous role in the formulation of this authentic Christian humanism. This hinged on two passages, which would eventually become the two most cited Vatican II passages of his papacy, because they dominated his thought:
 - GS 22 — The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. ... By the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, [Christ] fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. ... All this holds true not only for Christians, but for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way. For, since Christ died for all men, and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one, and divine, we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit in a manner known only to God offers to every man the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery. Such is the mystery of man, and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us.
 - GS 24 — Man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.
- He said in 1993 (CTK). "I had long been interested in man as a person. ... Then, when I discovered my priestly vocation, man became the central theme of my pastoral work." He goes on to describe how he needed to answer questions of young people about how to live, work, and respond to the isms and how that led to his deeper articulation of the personalistic principle, an attempt to "translate the commandment of love into the language of philosophical ethics. The person is a being for whom the only suitable dimension is love. We are just to a person if we love him. ... Love for a person excludes the possibility of treating him as an object of pleasure." Then he mentioned GS 24 and comments: "Here we truly have an adequate interpretation of the commandment of love. ... At the same time, the Council emphasizes that the most important thing about love is the sincere gift of self. In this sense the person is realized through love. ... Man affirms himself completely by giving of himself. This is the fulfillment of the commandment of love. This is also the full truth about man, a truth that Christ taught us by His life."
- When he was elected the 263rd successor of St. Peter, these two related ideas became the program of his pontificate, which was encapsulated in his first encyclical entitled, "Christ, the Redeemer of Man."

- He said, in *Redemptor Hominis*, that when he accepted in a spirit of obedience in faith the papacy, it was to give a response to the fundamental question of how we could grow closer to Christ as we approached the third millennium. “To this question... a fundamental and essential response must be given.” “Our response must be: Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is-towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man. We wish to look towards him —because there is salvation in no one else but him, the Son of God — repeating what Peter said: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” By his incarnation, life, teachings and particularly his suffering and death, Christ reveals [who God is:] that God is love. “In man’s history, this revelation of love and mercy has taken a form and a name: Jesus Christ.”
- That leads to the moral consequence. In one of the most beautiful passages in any of his papal writings, he wrote, “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer “fully reveals man to himself”. ... In this [human] dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the Redemption man becomes newly “expressed” and, in a way, is newly created. He is newly created! ... The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly-and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being-he must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into him with all his own self, he must “appropriate” and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself. How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he “gained so great a Redeemer” and if God “gave his only Son “in order that man “should not perish but have eternal life”
- In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man's worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say: the Good News. It is also called Christianity. This amazement determines the Church's mission in the world and, perhaps even more so, “in the modern world”. This amazement, which is also a conviction and a certitude-at its deepest root it is the certainty of faith, but in a hidden and mysterious way it vivifies every aspect of authentic humanism-is closely connected with Christ. It also fixes Christ's place-so to speak, his particular right of citizenship-in the history of man and mankind.
- The Holy Father would write in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, a 1994 book in which he responded to questions from a journalist, about how this message of *Redemptor Hominis* was within him before he was elected to the papacy and indicated both his theological vision and his pastoral style. It also was the central theme of the Theology of the Body
 - My first encyclical on the Redeemer of man (*Redemptor Hominis*) appeared a few months after my election on October 16, 1978. This means that I was actually carrying its contents *within me*. I had only to “copy” from memory and experience what I had already been living on the threshold of the papacy. I emphasize this because the encyclical represents a confirmation, on the one hand, of the *tradition of the schools* from which I came and, on the other hand, of the *pastoral style* reflected in this encyclical. The Council proposed, especially in *Gaudium et Spes*, that the mystery of redemption should be seen in light of the great renewal of man and of all that is human. The encyclical aims to be a *great hymn of joy for the fact that man has been redeemed through Christ* — redeemed in spirit and in body. This redemption of the body subsequently found its own expression in the series of catecheses for the Wednesday Papal audiences: *Male and female He created them.*” Perhaps it would be better to say: “Male and Female he Redeemed them.”

- Introduction to the TOB

- The TOB, in other words, was the elaboration and application of the contents he carried within him, a hymn of joy to the Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage, about Human Love in the Divine Plan, the two titles he gave to the TOB.
- It was the mature fruit of a life-long attempt to bring help man and woman learn love from Christ, live in that love, and love others in the same way.
- It went back to the beginning of his priesthood.
- He wrote in CTK in 1994:
 - “As a young priest,” he said, “I learned to love human love. This has been one of the fundamental themes of my priesthood — my ministry in the pulpit, in the confessional and also in my writing.
 - He said he “felt almost an inner call” from early in his priesthood to help the young learn how to respond appropriately to their vocation to love, to teach them how to love by helping them learn from Christ, the revelation of the father’s love, and to enter into his nuptial love and teaching them how to give of themselves sincerely and unselfishly to God and others.
 - He noted that if one loves human love there naturally arises the need to commit oneself completely to the service of “fair love,” because love is fair, it is beautiful. Young people are always searching for the beauty in love. They want their love to be beautiful. If they give in to weakness, following models of behavior that can rightly be considered a scandal in the contemporary world, in the depths of their hearts they still desire a beautiful and pure love.
 - Their hearts, like the heart of a young Augustine are restless, often seeking for meaning, for love, for self-giving, in wrong places rather than in right ones. For this reason, he said, “They need guides and they want them close at hand.” That’s what he sought to be, a guide close at hand to the young, in his work as a chaplain at St. Florian’s and a professor at the University of Lublin, as a priest and bishop leading them on mountain hikes, or the strenuous interior climb of retreats, as the author of Love and Responsibility, and even as a pope, through World Youth Days and get-togethers on every parish visit and every apostolic pilgrimage.
 - That’s what he sought to be for the world. That’s what his TOB is all about. And that’s what he hoped would happen to his brother priests, to fall in love with human love, to commit themselves to becoming guides to help the world learn the meaning of truly beautiful love, so that others may experience the fullness of redemption by receiving and reciprocating love.
- What he did in the Theology of the Body
 - There was a context to the TOB. It was to respond to the crisis in the Church after Humanae Vitae.
 - He had been appointed to the birth control commission by Paul VI, as a recognition of how powerful his 1960 book Love and Responsibility was. But the communists didn’t let him travel to be part of it. He had already written about the different anthropology between periodic continence and contraception, that the latter makes pleasure the point of human sexuality, which leads to mutual utilitarianism and the corruption of love. It was the opposite of an embrace of the other. It was an attempt to solve an ethical problem requiring self-mastery by a technological solution, because it looked at the body as a machine rather than as a sacrament of the person.
 - He chaired an interdisciplinary commission marriage commission in the Archdiocese of Krakow that, because he was prevented from attending the meetings of the Birth Control Commission in the Vatican, presented its own findings to Pope Paul VI. Curiously, it critiqued both what because known as the Majority and Minority Reports. It was called “the Foundations of the Doctrine of the Church concerning the Principles of Conjugal Life.” The Minority Report was one of the principal fonts for Paul VI’s Humanae Vitae. Curiously Cardinal Wojtyla and the others with him in Krakow thought that although the conclusions of the Minority Report were sound, the premises were not going to be persuasive. A few months before HV was published, they said that the Minority Report was employing too “objective” an analysis of the natural law — by focusing on the two fold nature of the conjugal act — whereas they thought it would be far more helpful to use the natural law

understood from the point of view of the subject, to focus on the nature of the conjugal agent rather than the conjugal act. This would confront readers with their experience to determine whether we were dealing with something that was truly worthy of marriage, worthy of love, worthy of the other, worthy of a child, rather than the description of an act that was far too scholastic for people in the Age of Aquarius. Unfortunately, the Krakow suggestions were not incorporated. We all know the many problems that came from the practical rejection of HV by not only many couples but also many clergy forming those couples. This led not just to a disconnect between many Catholics with the Church on the questions on the morality of contraception and conjugal sexuality, but also on a score of other items. In some ways, a general age of dissent was born, because once many began to think that the Church was wrong on the question of contraceptive use in marriage, it's not surprising that they began to think that the Church was wrong on the question of premarital sex, on same-sex activity, on abortion, on women and women's ordination, on papal authority, on the papacy in general and a score of other ideas that many things that were difficult for the modern world to accept.

- Cardinal Wojtyla saw this. He thought that the chief problem with HV was that it was constructed on an inadequate anthropology. Not that it's anthropology was wrong, but it wasn't explicited in a way in which people would see that to use contraception was to violate their own nature and their call to true love. Moreover it didn't confront enough the inadequate anthropology that was seeking to use a technological solution to an ethical problem.
- He began working on a response. Unlike L&R, which was fundamentally philosophical, this would be theological, to help people within the Church recognize that the Church's teachings in these areas were not somehow parallel or divorced from Biblical revelation, but flowed from the heart of what God revealed.
- He had worked on it when he could among his many other duties.
- First conclave. Finished first chapter. Second conclave. Didn't have as much time.
- Was elected with a manuscript in hand.
- General Structure of the TOB
 - Before Michael Waldstein's rediscovery of the original Polish manuscript and notes, there were various framings of the structure of the TOB. Waldstein has helped us see what was in Wojtyla's mind.
 - Two main parts, what he calls "trptychs":
 - Words of Christ (on the Redemption of the Body)
 - Christ appeals to the beginning (TOB 1-23)
 - Christ appeals to the Human Heart (TOB 24-63), which I like to break down into two sections, first the problem of the three-fold lust that attacks the human heart, and second the sketch of the solution in the redemption of the body.
 - Christ appeals to the Resurrection (TOB 64-86), including chastity
 - Sacramentality of Marriage — He takes these insights and applies them
 - The dimension of covenant and grace in marriage (103-107)
 - The Dimension of Sign (TOB 113-17)
 - He gave them the Law of Life as Their Inheritance (TOB 118-33)
 - We'll have a chance to break this down in the next seven talks and apply it to our own situation.
- How I came to the TOB
 - I came to the discovery of the TOB out of a look search for help.
 - It was in college at Harvard that I also discovered Catholics who didn't really know the Church's teachings or live them. Sex-ed talks during orientation just presumed that people would be having sex and just encouraging people to use so-called protection, and a culture in which it seemed acceptable and a given.

- I had never been isolated growing up in a city and going to a public high school with over 4,000 students. But I hadn't really been exposed to a culture in which the Gospel really hadn't penetrated deeply. Even kids who had gone to Catholic schools were living a lifestyle in proud contradiction to the decalogue.
- I knew I needed something deeper, not just for the apostolate but for my life. Thanks be to God, I had always accepted the Church's authority in matters of life in general, not to mention sexuality. The ten commandments were not ten suggestions or a test that you could pass by getting six of the ten right. So I followed the commandments, including the sixth, but I began to discover as a freshman that I needed something more in order to understand the "why" behind the "what," not just for my own confidence in living chastity but in order to be able to help those who were not living in accordance with it.
- It's at that point that I discovered Love and Responsibility, which had a enormous impact on me. I was taking a philosophy course on Immanuel Kant from Harvey Mansfield and plodding through Kant's Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, which was an excruciating experience, but one that prepared me very well for the equally excruciating experience of getting through the first 40 arduous philosophical pages of L&R. The study of Kant also helped me to grasp what Fr. Wojtyla was doing in taking Kant's second categorical imperative and applying it to the situation of the human experience of love. The central distinction between loving and using someone, between willing the other's good and treating the person like a subject with his or her own ends and using the person for one's own ends or gratification, was something that made simple for me what it was that I was called to live and pass on. The notion of chastity of raising a person's sexual values up to the dignity of the person as a whole, rather than abstracting or isolating them, gave me a real positive means to live out.
- Thereafter I found myself having late night conversations with all types of people over the next four years, helping them to examine their behavior in the light of the distinction between loving and using people, beginning with Kant. One-on-one, through friendship and doubtless help from above, these teachings when presented and modeled did help several people come to or return to the narrow path. For Catholics, the fact that it came from the present Pope, who seemed to understand many of the issues they were going through, made it more compelling. It was a particular apostolate I hadn't anticipated by the time I got to college but it was one that by the time I graduated I was carrying out assiduously. I also learned a method, which was to confront faith with human experience, to approach things from the central ethical distinction of whether we were serving or try to take advantage of others, that was applicable in many other discussions.
- That was a prelude to my study of the TOB. It was also a practicum for future priestly ministry, because I thought that Harvard was a microcosm for the world's misguided notions of sexuality and that those outside what we affectionately called the Kremlin on the Charles would need the apologetics of human sexuality as much as my fellow students did.
- While I pouring myself more and more into L&R, several people along the way — I cannot even remember who they were, but I pray for them in gratitude — mentioned to me that John Paul II had given us an even richer, more explicitly theological, presentation of the Church's understanding of human sexuality in his early years as Pope. I didn't really think anything could be quite as helpful as Love and Responsibility. But after several suggestions, I got my hands on the text at a study center run by Opus Dei near campus. This was in 1990, several years prior to the 1997 one-volume edition by the Daughters of the St. Paul. I found a copy of the 1981 Original Unity of Man and Woman covering the catecheses on Genesis, and then the 1983 Blessed are the Pure of Heart, which I understood as continuing the same project with a similar method. The battle ground between love and lust in the human heart was the essential battle between loving and using. Purity of heart was in a sense the lifting up of the glance to the overall good of the person, made in God's image and likeness. Then, during the summer, I read the other volumes and began to incorporate what I learned in my conversations with Catholics and fellow Christians. Eventually in Seminary I would re-read the Theology of the Body several

times and, because I was convinced not only of how important it was but how few Catholics and even most of my fellow seminarians knew of it, I asked Bishop O'Malley to allow me to study at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family in Rome, where I would be able to pour myself into these studies in a richer context so that I could return to the states as a disciple and apostle of the Theology of the Body.

- By the time I entered began my formal training for the priesthood, however, several aspects of Love and Responsibility and the Theology of the Body had begun to sink in deeply and provided the foundation for all four of the pillars of priestly training — human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. I think that they provide a bigger picture of how the TOB does not just refer to human sexuality but to so many aspects of Christian faith and life:
 - (ONE) It presented, in a compellingly simple and clear way, the meaning of life.
 - The purpose of life is to live in a communion of persons with God and others through the unselfish gift of oneself to God and others. Life is nuptial. Man cannot find himself except in the disinterested gift of himself for others.
 - Whatever God was asking of me, it involved growing into the likeness of the Divine Giver in whose image I was made. This gave me an incredible stability. The question of discernment for me became how God was asking me to give myself to others, but once I had seen that regardless, my life was meant to be a free gift, it made hearing the definitive call to the priesthood easier to perceive.
 - (TWO) It stressed that the human sexuality inclination is good, not evil.
 - Our sexual drive is given to us to impel us toward others, in accordance with the nuptial meaning of the body. Not to be repressed, but to be directed toward the good, beautiful and true, rehabilitation through ethos.
 - Critics of the Church are fundamentally wrong. We've allowed others to define it. It's meant to be part of a life-long liturgy.
 - (THREE) It helped describe very clearly why the teaching of the Church with regard to love, marriage, sexuality and family was true.
 - The whole section on body language helped me to see that only in marriage can the language of the body expressed in making love be truthful. Otherwise, everything else is a lie, and lust in marriage is a lie, just as much as the kiss of Judas.
 - (FOUR) It gave a clear definition of what love really is, in the midst of so much confusion, and how the states of life fit together.
 - St. Paul in 1 Cor 13. Nothing is of value without love.
 - I clearly saw that celibacy and virginity for the sake of the kingdom was a loveless life — because it was a life without sex, marriage, family and children — but a vocation to love.
 - This was incredibly important for me. Moreover the focus on doing it for the kingdom, not just as a requirement for ordination, helped me to see its beauty. Unlike the daughter of Jephthah in the book of judges who bewailed her virginity before her death, I was able to see the virginal meaning not just of my body but of my existence — to give myself to God first — which reinforced that the celibate chastity of a priest is fundamentally a yes, not a no, that the moral struggle is not just much a battle against sin — that's part of it — but it's to become whom we've been created to be, to love as God loves, to love passionately (eros, toward the good, true and beautiful), with agape (self-sacrifice), as friends (philia).
 - (FIVE) It summarized and synthesized for me all the essentials of salvation history
 - It brilliantly encapsulated almost all of the crucial stages of salvation into a coherent whole. It provided a compelling view of Genesis that went beyond anything that would have been written in the patristic accounts of the

Hexaemeron. It captured the story of the Fall and sin, of the temptations with which we're confronted, the type of life, in purity, holiness and honor with which we're supposed to live, and sets us forth with a real vision of heaven and the means to attain it.

- (SIX) It presented a Trinitarian basis for all of reality
 - I can't tell you how helpful this was for me as I launched out on my theological studies.
 - God is not a doctrine, but a communion of persons, a lover, beloved and the love them, a three-in-one communion of self-giving and self-receiving.
 - This was ultimately the main thrust of Wojtyla's papacy, shown in the triptych of his first three encyclicals, on Christ, the Redeemer of Man, on God the Father, Rich in Mercy, and on the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life.
- (SEVEN) This led to a sacramental sense of the world, which opened up my eyes even further.
 - The human body was a sacrament of the person.
 - Marriage was the primordial sacrament of Trinitarian divine love.
 - All of creation was now imbued for me with something more.
 - It gave me eyes to see what I had been missing all along, that everything was charged with God's grandeur. The TOB cured my blindness.
- (EIGHT) Sanctity — the universal call to holiness — could not be achieved except through the redemption of the body.
 - Sanctity happens through abstaining from unchastity, from controlling the body in holiness and honor.
 - I thes 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity; that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God
 - Christ's love has sanctification as its purpose (Eph 5).
- (NINE) It presented to me a clear theological method that not only guided my studies but informed the training of my heart to try to become a genuine and effective pastor:
 - The method was to begin with Christ's words and deeds to discern the truth about human existence. GS: Christ fully reveals man to himself and makes him supreme vocation clear.
 - The Church's teaching in these controversial areas was not based merely on an objective analysis of what nature reveals, but on the words and actions of the Lord himself. There was an immediacy to this method that I always found compelling.
 - If the modern world thinks subjectively, inductively and experientially, the Church cannot persuade adequately if it teaches objectively, deductively and via principles. I found in the TOB in general a model of how to confront the teachings of the Gospel with modern experience and life.
 - Moreover, it gave an adequate anthropology and apologetic for the most controversial questions. It applied it to the subject of the use of contraception in marriage, but the same method and principles can be applied to all types of other issues: pornography, masturbation, same-sex activity and more. Eventually I would apply it to the situation of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts.
 - The TOB gives us the categories and methodology to confront the attacks on marriage from a Christian point of view. Jesus didn't specifically speak about why same sex marriage is wrong, but he did speak about marriage and said that for this reason a man should leave not his two dads or two moms, but a father and mother, and cling not to whomever he is sexually attracted, but to his wife, and the two should become one flesh, which means not merely in the ephemeral

bodily contact in the act of making love, but in a child who is one-flesh union of Father and Mother in ways that 20th century biologists have made clear, and what God has joined — which is not just a particular man and a particular woman in a particular marriage but man and woman as a whole — all the rogue courts, legislative acts or popular referenda should not divide.

- Theology needs to be re-read according to the pedagogy of the body found in Christ's words.
- (TEN) It showed the positive aspect of the Gospel and equipped us to look at the Church's teachings, not just in the controversial questions about human sexuality, but also in general, with confidence.
 - There was no need for us to be defensive about the Church's teachings on sexuality or anything else.
 - In my interactions in college, I witnessed that when presented clearly, people of good will, people with a functioning conscience who were made for the truth, are not hostile to the truth but, once the thorns of worldly cares and anxieties are removed, once the shallow superficialities of rocky soil are drilled through, they can receive the seed of the Gospel on good soil and bear much fruit. I was convinced if proud Harvard kids like myself and others, prone to finding exceptions and arguing sophistically against almost anything, could receive this teaching and begin to live it, then there was real hope and cause for those who had no pretensions about always being right...
 - There's hope: In ethos of redemption, it is possible to pass from error to truth, from sin to chastity, in life according to the Spirit.
 - I already had a confidence that the Church's teachings were true and right, but it helped me to see why they were right and embolden me to approach those with questions, doubts and counter-arguments with poise and perseverance.
 - I saw it as a balm to begin to repair the damage done to the separation from faith and life that is at the root of so many of the ecclesiological problems that were brought to the surface and exacerbated by the failure of many in the Church to accept the teachings of *Humanae Vitae*. Once one teaching was rejected, everything else was up for grabs, because, as St. Thomas Aquinas stated 7 centuries earlier, once we reject what we clearly know the Church to teach definitively, anything else we hold that is faithful to the Church's teaching we hold by coincidence not by an act of Catholic faith, because we no longer trust in God who sent his Son who sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Church into all truth.
 - These were all present in the beginning and helped influence my openness to priestly formation as well as the way I always sought to complement the formation program with what was not being given.
- Stories of John Paul II
 - With the time I have left, I'd like to finish with some personal stories about our teacher in these two days of continuing formation, which give a glimpse at some of the ways in which he lived the gift of self, some of my first hand impressions of the way in which he did his pastoral work. This will also show a little of why I'm so passionate about the TOB.
 - I was very fortunate to have been sent by then Bishop Sean O'Malley to prepare for the priesthood at the North American College in Rome, and during my five-plus years of study, I had the incredible privilege to study, pray and live a stone's throw from the living rock from Poland on whom Christ was continuing to build up his Church. I had the chance to be

with him to celebrate Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, to be with him at catechetical audiences, Masses and speeches, to rejoice with him at many beatifications and canonizations, to accompany him in the streets during Corpus Christi Processions, pray the Rosary with him before images of Our Lady in the Vatican Gardens. I also had the chance to meet him. Meeting him once would have been the thrill of a lifetime. Meeting him twice would have been much more than I could have merited or dreamed. But I had the chance 11 times to meet him personally and talk with him briefly. I'd like to share a few things from some of those meetings with you, because I think they help to describe the man who wrote and lived the Theology of the Body.

- The first time was a few months into my first theology year. I had written the pope's personal secretary, then Msgr. Stanislaw Dziwisz, on behalf of a couple from Texas whose parents had given much of the money to Pope Pius XII to excavate the necropolis underneath St. Peter's basilica that led to the rediscovery of St. Peter's tomb. There was a mix-up at the Papal Apartment, however, and the Maltese Sister at the Vatican switchboard called to say, the day that the couple flew back to the United States, that they were to report to the bronze doors the following morning for the private Mass with the Holy Father. I explained to the Sister the situation and — putting out into the deep with a little bit of trepidation — asked whether, considering there were now two open spots, whether my twin brother and I would be able to come to the Mass. My identical twin, Scot, was a first theologian for the Diocese of Bridgeport at the NAC as well. The sister said she would have to check with Msgr. Dziwisz, but called back in 15 minutes to say that that would be okay. So we attended the Mass at the end of which we went into the large papal library where we lined up around the periphery waiting for the Pope to come to greet everyone individually. Scot and I were staying toward the end of the line, in our identical cassocks, our identical glass frames and our identical short haircuts. Msgr. Dziwisz kept looking in direction as he came — which is something, I have to confess, that Scot and I were used to as identical twins, wherever we go. When he got to us, the papal secretary said, “Siete veramente gemelli,” “You guys are really twins,” which is something the Holy Father picked up on as well. It was frankly difficult to be holding the hands of the Holy Father as he continues to go from one face to another to see if there were any means by which he could tell us apart. He began to ask us a few questions about where we were from and whether we had other family members. Then he asked whether we ever played tricks on our rector, seminary professors, fellow students and bishops. It was a direct question in the presence of the successor of St. Peter, so Scot and I, blurted out together, “sempre!” The fact that identical twins answered the same question in the exact way at exactly the same time made the Holy Father, Msgr. Dziwisz and all the others who understood Italian all begin to laugh with us. The Holy Father tapped us on the cheeks, said “Bravi” and then “gemelli americani” and moved on. But it was a really providential occurrence, because while the Pope and his secretary normally would meet a multitude of visitors every day that no one could possibly keep track of, because of the rarity of the spectacle and a funny first impression, they did know who the “gemelli americani” were. Even after Scot ended up discerning to leave the seminary and eventually get married, I continued to introduce myself whenever I'd write to the household as one of the American twins and they'd regularly ask about how my twin brother was doing.
- Before returning to the States in June of 2000, I asked to whether it would be possible to come to concelebrate the Pope's private Mass. It was granted and Archbishop Dziwisz asked me to proclaim the Gospel. After Mass I went up to the Pope, who now because of his frailty was receiving those after Mass while seated on a chair, and let him know I was returning home. He asked me what I would be doing, and I told him that I was going to be working with Portuguese immigrants and with young people as a high school chaplain. He smiled and said, “Giovani!” young people. I asked him if he had any advice: he told me, “let them know you love them.” He asked about my twin brother and I told him I was preparing to celebrate his wedding in ten days. “Tell him and his new wife, congratulations!” he replied in English. Then, anticipating it might be my last time meeting him, I told him that I

really hoped to be able to spend my priestly life helping to propagate his teachings on human love through the Theology of the Body. I was holding his hands at this point. He squeezed my hands and said, looked me in the eyes and said, “Grazie!” I’ve never forgotten that. He was thanking me — as I was thanking him with all my being. There was a picture taken at the moment I was holding his hands and because of the reflection, I think, off my watch, there was a burst of light coming from our hands. That’s always been my mother’s favorite picture to send around to all the relatives... I asked for his prayers for the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of human love. “Certo,” he said with a smile, “Certainly,” and then he told me he wanted to give me his blessing, and did. I’ve always taking that as a kind of commissioning, not just from the author of the Theology of the Body but from the Vicar of Christ.

- The last time I met him was about seven months before he died. I was guiding a pilgrimage by the Acton Institute to Rome and we received the opportunity to meet the Holy Father after one of the Wednesday audiences. I brought the group around the chair at which was sitting and Archbishop James Harvey introduced us as a group to him briefly. He looked at me and said, “Gemello Americano.” I knelt down on the side of his chair as we were preparing for the photographers from L’Osservatore Romano and Felici’s to take their photos. As the cameras were snapping, I felt someone put his hand on my head. While still faking a smile, I inwardly was wondering what idiot on my group was trying to goof off during photos with the Holy Father. I anticipated that the person was probably making V-signs and all types of other irreverent gestures. The photos stopped. And I began to get up to give a teacher’s stare at the malefactor. But when I turned around, I noticed that the hand was attached to a white cassock. Stunned at the identity of the joker, and dumbfounded about how a man stricken with Parkinson’s would have even been able to reach me where I was kneeling, I simply blurted out, doubtless all types of protocol, “Santità, che cosa ha significato quello?” “Holiness, what did *that* mean?” He looked at me straight in the eyes and said, “Un giorno saprai.” “One day you’ll know.” I kissed his ring for the last time and left. I still haven’t figured out what that meant. My priest friends all joke that it was a paternal gesture to pray that my dead hair follicles receive a miraculous resurrection — that the Pope was using me as a type of clerical chia-pet — but since that time there has been no new papally-induced hair growth, so we’re going to need another miracle for his beatification. Deep down inside, I’ve always prayed and hoped that, in the gesture of a laying on of hands, I, like Elisha from Elijah, was receiving a portion of John Paul II’s spirit to “fall in love with human love,” as he did as a young priest, and be able to pass on this Gospel to others with zeal and perseverance so that it might have as much of an impact on others as it did on me.
- I hope that all of us will receive during these days a double-portion of his spirit!