

# **Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body**

## *A Cliff Notes' Version*

### **Introduction**

- A. The Theology of the Body is the term used to describe the teaching of Pope John Paul about the human person and human sexuality given during his Wednesday Catecheses in St. Peter's Square between September 5, 1979 and November 28, 1984. John Paul II says that these catecheses could be called "Human Love in the Divine Plan" or "The Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage."
- B. 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.
  - o Two main parts:
    - Words of Christ (on the Redemption of the Body)
    - Sacramentality of Marriage
  - o Words of Christ
    - I. Christ appeals to the beginning (TOB 1-23)
    - II. Christ appeals to the Human Heart (TOB 24-63)
    - III. Christ appeals to the Resurrection (TOB 64-86), including chastity
  - o The Sacrament — He takes the insights and applies them:
    - IV. The dimension of covenant and grace in marriage (103-107)
    - V. The Dimension of Sign (TOB 113-17)
    - VI. He gave them the Law of Life as Their Inheritance (TOB 118-33)
- C. My aim is to summarize accurately and clearly the central themes that the Holy Father examines in each of the sections. This will help those who want to become familiar with the main ideas of the theology of the body to do so rather quickly — in 30 pages rather than 400 — as well as assist those who are already students of the theology of the body to have them presented in an annotated outline form to facilitate their passing on this Gospel of Human Love in the Divine Plan to others. Eventually, I hope to do a commentary to accompany the various sections, but that will come later!

### **I. Christ Appeals to the Beginning**

(Catechesis on the book of Genesis)

- A. The "beginning" of marriage in God's plan.
  - 1) In his dispute with the Pharisees (Mt 19:3 ff), Christ takes marriage back to God's plan in the beginning, seen in Genesis, which sets forth a proper understanding of the nature of man and woman, made in God's image, as well as the unity and indissolubility of marriage.
  - 2) Man is created by God in the image and likeness of God, not in the image of creatures. This image involves sexual differentiation: "God created man in his image ... male and female he created them." God pronounced the human person "very good." Genesis established a solid basis for metaphysics, anthropology and ethics, which has importance for the theology of body.
  - 3) The tree of the knowledge of good and evil separates the state of original innocence of Adam and Eve (in which they were "naked and unashamed") from the state of human sinfulness, which is man's historical state. In his teaching on marriage, Christ goes back to the state of original innocence and his words are normative for the theology of man and for the theology of body. We cannot understand man's present state without reference to his beginning. The proto-Gospel of Gen 3:15 also puts man in the theological perspective of the history of salvation, to the "redemption of our body" (Rom 8:23), which guarantees the

continuity between the hereditary state of man's sinfulness and his original innocence. This redemption of the body, which agrees with our experience, opens the way for the proper theology of the body.

#### B. Man's original solitude

- 1) God said: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18). This "man" refers to the human person, and not just to the male.
- 2) God had put man through a test in naming all of creation, which in addition to revealing to man his freedom, allowed him to become aware of his difference from the rest of creation. He was also not God. Man is conscious that he belongs to the visible world as a body among different bodies, but he was self-consciously in search of his identity and felt alone (another sign of self-knowledge), because he was different from the rest of creation and from God. This indicates man's original subjectivity.
- 3) God's command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil provides man the moment of choice and self-determination, of free will.
- 4) God's command to "fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion" (Gen 1:28) by tilling the earth shows that man's capacity to dominate the earth lies within himself, transforming it to his own needs.

#### C. The original unity of man and woman

- 1) The meaning of original solitude (man-Adam) is substantially prior to the meaning of original unity (male-female).
- 2) The analogy of Adam's falling asleep to wake up "ish-ishah" (man-woman) probably indicates a return to a non-being, to a moment preceding creation, so that solitary man may emerge in his double unity as male and female. This "definitive creation," which consists in the unity of two beings, breaks man's solitude.
- 3) Woman's being made from Adam's rib shows a bodily homogeneity, of the same flesh and bone (Gen 2:23). Woman was previously defined as a helper fit for him. Despite sexual differentiation, Adam recognizes this in his joyful exclamation over the presence of the female, which helps to establish the full meaning of original unity. Woman was for man and vice versa. Man discovers his own humanity through the other's help. This first and "original" emotion of the male in the presence of the female is noteworthy.
- 4) There was unity and duality present, unity in human nature, duality in the masculinity and femininity of created man. This original unity through masculinity and femininity overcame original solitude while affirming what constitutes the human person in solitude. Original solitude is the way that leads to the unity of the communion of persons. "Communion" points to the existential help derived from the other. One exists "for" the other. Prior to the creation of a helper, man was alone because he is by nature a being "for" another. The communion of persons is formed by the double solitude of man and woman distinct from creation and from God, in their mutual help for each other, flowing from their self-knowledge (subjectivity) and self-determination (free choice). Sex is a constituent part of the person.
- 5) Gen 1 speaks of man created in the "image of God" but Gen 2 points to this communion of persons. Man became the "image and likeness" of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons. He is an image in the solitude of a Person who rules the world, but also, and essentially, as an image of a Trinitarian communion of Persons. This latter point is probably the deepest theological aspect that can be said about man and about the theology of the body. There is a deep unity between male and female through the body. From this deep unity flows the blessing of fertility and human procreation (Gen 1:28).
- 6) The body reveals man, which allows the male to recognize the female as his flesh and bone. The theology of the body is also a theology of sex, or of masculinity and femininity, made in the image of God. Unity through the body — "the two will be one flesh" — is ethical and sacramental, because it indicates the incarnate communion of persons.
- 7) In sum, the body, which through its own masculinity or femininity, right from the beginning helps both ("a helper fit for him") to find themselves in communion of persons, becomes, in a particular way, the constituent element of their union, when they become husband and wife.

#### D. The unity and indissolubility of marriage

- 1) The unity of Gen 2:24, "they become one flesh," is what happens in the conjugal act. The body allows the unity of persons when they submit their communion of persons to the blessing of fertility. Every time

man and woman unite in “one flesh,” they rediscover the mystery of creation, as flesh and bones of each other, and call each other by name. Becoming one flesh is a way to discover their own humanity, in original unity and duality of mysterious mutual attraction. Sex is a new surpassing of limit of man’s bodily solitude and assumes the solitude of the body of the second “self” as one’s own.

- 2) From the beginning, man and woman were created for unity in the flesh, but also for the choice to leave “father and mother and cleave to his wife.” Man belongs to parents by nature, to his wife by choice. Choice establishes the conjugal pact. This choice presumes a mature consciousness of the body and the meaning of the body in the mutual self-giving of persons. Every conjugal union leads to the discovery of the unifying meaning of body. Procreation is rooted in creation and reproduces its mystery.

#### E. The meaning of original nakedness; meaning of shame

- 1) The theology of the body is connected with man’s personal subjectivity, wherein the consciousness of the meaning of the body develops. Man’s and woman’s unashamed nakedness points to this consciousness. Later, “then,” after sin — their first test of obedience, listening to Word in all its truth and accepting love, according to God’s creative will — their eyes will be opened, they’ll know that they are naked, and they will cover themselves. Shame is an experience that is not only original, but a “boundary” experience.
- 2) With the first sin, there was a radical change in the meaning of original nakedness. After sin, there was fear “I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.” In shame, the human being experiences fear with regard to his “second self,” and this is substantially fear for his own “self.” But it also involves an “instinctive” need for affirmation and acceptance. It is a complex experience that both keeps human beings apart as well as draws them closer.
- 3) The experience of shame, and the appearance of sexual modesty, is connected with loss of original fullness. Original nakedness corresponds to the fullness of consciousness of the meaning of the body, “flesh of my flesh,” which through their mutual self-gift is the sacrament of their unity. There was an original “communication” between man and woman through the “common union” between them expressed through the body, which is the sacrament of the person in his ontological and existential concreteness. The body manifests man and allows for the communication, the communion of persons, between man and woman. This is crucial for the meaning of original nakedness.
- 4) The original lack of shame points to the original depth in affirming what is inherent in the person that allows for true mutual interpersonal communion. The “exterior” perception of physical nakedness corresponds to the “interior” fullness of seeing the other as God does, in his image, as “very good.” *Nakedness signifies the original good of God’s vision*, of the “pure” value of humanity as male and female, of the body and of sex. Man and woman see and know each other with all the peace of exterior and interior gazes, creating the fullness of interpersonal intimacy and communication on the basis of the communion of persons through a mutual self-gift. Shame brings with it a limitation in seeing with the eyes of the body through a disturbed interpersonal intimacy. The meaning of original nakedness corresponds to their understanding of the “nuptial” meaning of the body (created for each other in love).

#### F. The nuptial meaning of the body

- 1) Genesis allows us to ground an adequate anthropology in the theological context of the image of God in the “hermeneutics of the gift.” The dimension of the gift decides the essential truth and depth of the meaning of original solitude-unity-nakedness and is at the heart of the mystery of creation and the theology of the body.
- 2) Creation is itself a fundamental and “radical” giving by God, in which the gift comes into being from nothingness. Every creature bears within him the sign of the original and fundamental gift. There is a Giver, a receiver of the gift and the relationship between the two. Man is created in the image of this Giver. God created the world as a gift to man, “for him.” Man is capable of understanding this gift which is creation. But man waits for a being with whom he can exist in a relationship of mutual giving. Both God and he recognize that it is not good for him to be alone; man realizes his essence only by existing “with someone” and “for someone.” The communion of persons means existing in a mutual “for”, in a relationship of mutual gift. This is the fulfillment of man’s original solitude. This explains, too, man’s original happiness. This mutual gift happens through love.

- 3) There is a deep connection between the mystery of creation, springing from Love, and the beatifying beginning of man as male and female. Man's rejoicing is interpersonal; the "flesh" and "bones" express the person. Man emerges from sleep in the dimension of mutual gift. The body is the original sign of a creative donation and of the awareness of this by man and woman. The male and female body is a witness to, a sacrament of, this gift. This is how sex enters the theology of the body.
- 4) The body has a "nuptial meaning," the sign and means of this personal gift. It was clear from the beginning, and hence there was no shame in nakedness. By uniting in one flesh, their humanity is subject to blessing of fertility. This procreative finality is part of the nuptial meaning of the body. They are free with the very freedom of the gift of love. From the beginning, the human body, with its sex, is not only a source of fruitfulness but has the "nuptial attribute," capable of expressing the love by which the person becomes a gift and fulfills the meaning of his existence. GS 24: man is the only creature in the visible world that God willed "for its own sake," and "can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself."
- 5) The original nuptial meaning of the body explains the original lack of shame, because they were free in the freedom of the mutual gift of themselves. This freedom means self-mastery, which is the precondition for the ability to give oneself to another in love — "no one can give what he doesn't have." Free interiorly with the freedom of the gift, man and woman could enjoy the whole truth about man, just as God Yahweh had revealed these things to them in the mystery of creation. Man and woman were revealed as created for the sake of the other and find each other only in giving of themselves to each other. Man and woman have this original "nuptial" understanding of the body, that they are created for each other in love.
- 6) The human body is created to express love through the gift and to affirm the other through existential self-giving "for [the other's] sake." This affirmation is the acceptance of the gift and is without shame. This causes man's original happiness. The nuptial meaning of the body will remain after the fall, but will undergo many distortions, as it awaits the "redemption of the body."
- 7) The body has a nuptial meaning because the person has a nuptial nature.
- 8) This nuptial meaning can be fulfilled in the vocation to marriage but also in making a gift of themselves for the kingdom of heaven. There is the freedom of the gift in the human body, which points to the full "nuptial" meaning.

#### G. Mystery of man's original innocence

- 1) The fullness of the nuptial meaning of the body in its original nakedness is rooted in love. Original happiness is rooted in love. Christ is the witness of this love, flowing from the Creator in the beginning. Man's original innocence is founded interiorly on his participation in the interior life of God himself in his holiness through an original benefaction of grace. It is witnessed by their having no shame before each other. The nuptial meaning of the body is discovered through original innocence. This original innocence is an essential characteristic for the theology of the body, because it radically excludes shame of the body.
- 2) We reconstruct this original innocence and its connection to the nuptial meaning of the body historically after the Fall. This original innocence is a particular "purity of heart" that preserves an interior faithfulness to the gift according to the nuptial meaning of the body. It precedes good and evil. The human will is originally innocent. There is an innocence in the reciprocal "experience of the body," which inspires the interior exchange of the nuptial gift of the person. This exchange is the real source of the experience of innocence.
- 3) The exchange points to the reciprocal acceptance of the other. Mutual donation and acceptance ("welcoming") creates the communion of persons. The giving and accepting interpenetrate, so that the giving itself becomes accepting, and the acceptance is transformed into giving. The opposite of this would be a privation of the gift and a reduction of the other to an "object for myself," an object of lust. This change will mark the beginning of shame, which will be a threat inflicted on the gift and the collapse of innocence.
- 4) The woman was "given" to man in the mystery of creation and received by him as a gift in the full truth of her person and inspires the reciprocal gift and acceptance. Real masculinity comes through the "possession of self" thanks to which he is capable both of giving himself and of receiving the other's gift.

- 5) JP II is considering the time before the Fall from the aspect of human subjectivity, not the method of objectivization proper to metaphysics of man's original innocence and justice. We are also doing it according to the state of fallen and then redeemed nature, historically after the fact.
- 6) Man entered the world with an ethos to his body, which is meant for self-gift in love. This is crucial for the theology of the body. The nuptial meaning of the body allows us to know who man and woman are and should be, and therefore how he should mold his activity. Gen 2:24 notes that man and woman were created for marriage, and through marital one-flesh union, for procreation. Original innocence determines the perfect ethos of the gift. This nuptial union comes about through freedom, leaving "father and mother." If man and woman cease to be a disinterested gift for each other, they will recognize that they are naked and shame will spring in their hearts. Woman is originally not an object for the man; only when the nakedness makes the other an "object" is nakedness a source of shame. Purity of heart prevented this originally and allowed them to see in each other the nuptial gift.
- 7) Man is the highest expression of divine self-giving, and the nuptial meaning of the body is the primordial sacrament, which efficaciously transmits the invisible mystery of God's Truth and Love. This sacrament is personal, but visible through masculine or feminine body. Man as the image of God revealed the sacramentality of creation. Because man and the world constituted a sacrament of God's truth and love, man and the world were holy. Man sensed this holiness in the nuptial meaning of body.
- 8) After original sin, they lose the grace of original innocence, and the nuptial meaning of the body is obscured, but remains as distant echo of original innocence through love. Through shame, man will rediscover himself as the guardian of the mystery of the other, of the freedom of the gift.

#### H. Biblical knowledge and procreation; motherhood

- 1) Sin and death entered man's history through the very heart of the unity of two in one flesh. Man was the first to feel fear and shame of nakedness.
- 2) In Gen 4 (after Fall), Adam knew Eve and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." Conjugal union in one flesh is defined as knowledge, which is reciprocal. This refers to the deepest essence of married life, of the meaning of one's body in becoming one flesh with another through love. Husband and wife reveal themselves to each other through the body; they're given to be known. "Datum" and "donum" are equivalent. The individual person is known, not just the other sex. Man comes to know himself and the full meaning of his body through this reciprocal knowledge, which is at the basis of the theology of the body. The knowledge that was the basis of man's original solitude (in knowing himself different from God and the rest of creation) is now at the basis of the unity of man and woman. Man confirms Eve's name as "mother of all the living" (Gen 3:20).
- 3) The mystery of femininity is manifested and revealed completely through motherhood, although it is initially hidden. Woman stands before man as a mother. The mystery of man's masculinity, the generative and "fatherly" meaning of his body, is also thoroughly revealed. Knowledge conditions begetting for both. This knowledge allows the full truth ("objectivity") of the body to be obtained, as well as the full subjectivity of man and woman in mutual self-fulfillment in the gift. Knowledge is not passive but active.
- 4) Man and woman know each other in the third, sprung from them both, which is a new revelation and discovery of themselves.
- 5) The Bible praises motherhood and femininity. Eve's "I have gotten a man!" shows she recognizes the humanity, "bone of bones, flesh of flesh" of the child. The child is conceived, "with the help of the Lord!" after they "sleep" together in loving communion. In every child, there is reproduced the "image of God," which constitutes a basis of continuity and unity, even after sin. This knowledge "with the help of the Lord" reproduces and renews man as the image of God and helps to recognize humanity in the child.
- 6) The command "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth!" (Gen 1:28) is fulfilled through nuptial bodily communion and mutual "knowledge." There is a generative meaning to the body, which is connected to the nuptial meaning. Masculinity conceals within it the meaning of fatherhood; femininity that of motherhood. The theology of the body has its roots in this beginning.
- 7) Adam and Eve are tempted to try to take possession of the other through a Biblical equivalent of eros that would not have been present before the Fall, in which there was no possessiveness. After the Fall, man and woman must arduously reconstruct the meaning of the disinterested mutual gift.

- 8) Man's sentence after the fall, "you shall return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19), shows that death hovers over the human experience of life. Eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil detached man from God and from the tree of life. Life is not taken away, but given to man as a task in an ever-recurring cycle of conception, birth and death. Life always overcomes death. Knowledge always allows man to surpass his solitude and affirm his being in the other, and then together in the new being generated. Man, despite suffering, sinfulness and death, continues to put "knowledge" at the "beginning" of "generation" and thereby participates in God's vision of man from the beginning as very good.

#### J. Christ's answer about marriage in integral vision of man

- 1) Our generation continues to query Christ about marriage and divorce, but Christ's original answer, pointing to the beginning, is still fundamental. Christ continues to refer us to the beginning.
- 2) We discover man's true identity from the beginning in the mystery of creation in Christ within the mystery of redemption. This is how we construct a theological anthropology and a theology of the body from which the full Christian view of marriage and family emerge. This is Christ's total vision of man to which we must return in our day in which it is obscured.
- 3) The beginning reveals to us the meaning and necessity of the theology of the body, which we see is a pre-scientific knowledge of the body in the structure of the personal subject. This understanding must be the basis of all modern science on human sexuality. When the Word became flesh, the body entered theology (the science of God) and the incarnation and redemption became the definitive source of the sacramentality of marriage. Christians, especially those with the vocation to marry, are called to make this "theology of the body" the content of their life and behavior. They need to rediscover the nuptial and generative meaning of the body. Christ leads man (male-female) in the sacrament of marriage along the path of the "redemption of the body" and the rediscovery of the body's dignity, meaning, and call to communion.

## II. Christ Appeals to the Human Heart

### A. Christ interiorizes the law

- 1) Christ's statement that "someone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:27-28) is a key to the theology of the body. The Decalogue had already said, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." We are called to penetrate the full ethical and anthropological meaning of the statement to understand the general truth about man after the fall, which is key to the theology of the body.
- 2) In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ fundamentally revises our way of following the commandments. He came not to abolish but to fulfill the law and the prophets. He calls us to the real meaning of the Law in general and to the commandment against adultery in particular. Christ takes the law within; he interiorizes it within conscience. It is no longer just a norm, but man becomes a subject of morality. The OT focused on the "act of the body," whereas Christ points beyond it to the interior justice of man's heart in every age. Man is called to find himself again interiorly, in his "heart," rediscovering the nuptial and generative meaning of his body.

### B. Lust as the result of the Fall, a breach in the covenant with God.

- 1) Adultery is a breach of the unity of man and woman in one flesh through the attempt to unite with someone else according to the body, or, here, even according to the heart. It flows from lust, through the sense of sight, as with David toward Bathsheba.
- 2) 1 John 2:16-17 describes the three forms of lust that are "not of the Father but of the world,"— lust of the flesh, of the eyes and the pride of life. These point to the truth about man and are important for the theology of the body. St. John presumes they are clear. These lusts are in the world through the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in man's heart. This is not the "world" created by God, which was good, but the world that results from man's breaking the covenant in his heart. Sin transforms the world into a source and place of lust. To understand it, we need to go back to the beginning, at the

- threshold of historical man. There will we understand the “lustful man” and explain his relationship to the human heart, which is so important for the theology of the body.
- 3) In Gen 3:1-5, the human heart questions God’s gift, of creation, of love, of the other, of himself as God’s image. Taking the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a fundamental choice against the Creator’s will, motivated by the serpent to “be like God.” Man casts God from his heart and cuts himself off from what “is of the Father” and becomes “of the world.” Adam’s and Eve’s eyes were opened, they knew they were naked, and covered themselves. This shame before each other and God suggests the beginning of lust in man’s heart. It shakes the foundations of their existence, and they began to fear God and tried to hide from him. Man tries to cover with the shame of his own nakedness the real origin of fear, his sin and alienation from Love and from the participation in the Gift. Man was deprived of the supernatural and preternatural endowment before sin and suffered the lack of his original fullness of the image of God. The three forms of lust correspond to that loss, to that lack, to the deficiencies that came with sin.
  - 4) Man’s state after the fall differs greatly from before sin. There’s a radical change in meaning of original nakedness. Previously, nakedness represented full acceptance of the body in its personal truth. The body was the expression of the person in visible world, which distinguished him from the rest and allowed him to confirm himself. The body was a tangible verification of man’s original solitude, which allowed for the mutual donation in communion. The body was the unquestionable sign of the image of God. Acceptance of the body was the acceptance of the visible world and the guarantee of his dominion over it (Gen 1:28). Sin causes the loss of original certainty of the “image of God” expressed in the body, as well as man’s confidence in the divine vision of the world. The ground becomes “cursed” because of man, who only with “toil” and “sweat” will receive its produce. The end of this toil is death — “you are dust and to dust you shall return.” Man’s fear because of his nakedness express a sense of defenselessness, of insecurity before nature.
  - 5) There was a cosmic shame as well as shame within humanity, within the original communion of persons, within man himself. Man and woman hide their nakedness from each other; they hide their distinctive, visible masculinity or femininity. There was a sexual character to this shame relative to the other sex seen in their covering their sexual organs. There is a contradiction within man between his flesh and the Spirit, what St. Paul calls a war between his members and his mind (Rom 7:22-23). The body is no longer subject to the spirit and threatens the peace and unity of the person. This is the beginning of lust, which threatens self-control and self-mastery.
  - 6) The lustful man does not control his body as before the fall. He is no longer automatically master of himself. There is an interior imbalance, with a sexual character, evidenced in lust and in the covering of body parts. Man has a shame of his own sexuality relative to the other human being. At the beginning, shame is explained by lust and lust by shame. The birth of shame in the human heart leads to the beginning of lust, the three-fold concupiscence of the body St. John describes. Man is ashamed of his body owing to lust or evil desire. Desire comes from a lack or necessity. Human lust is a desire for what was lost from the meaning of the body.
  - 7) Shame has a double meaning: it indicates the threat to the value of the human person and at the same time preserves this value interiorly. Lust and shame exist side-by-side and we can appeal to shame to guarantee those values which lust tries to take away. This is why Christ, in speaking of lust, appeals to the human heart.
  - 8) Lust shatters the man-woman relationship, causing them to hide their sexual differences from each other. The body ceased to be the “trustworthy” substratum of the communion of persons. Original purity, which allowed for full mutual communication through bodily self-donation and acceptance, disappears. Their original difference changes from a call to communion to a source of mutual confrontation. There is a loss in the certainty of the meaning of the human body as a call to communion. Man lost the sense of the image of God in himself and this is manifested with the shame of the body. Sexuality became an “obstacle” in the personal relationship of man and woman. Shame also brought with it an almost constitutive difficulty of identifying with one’s own body and with another through the body.
  - 9) This is the “second” discovery of sex, in historical man, subject to lust. The necessity of hiding before the other proves a fundamental lack of trust, a breakdown in the original communion. God describes this in saying of the woman “I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth

children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Gen 3:16). There is a breakdown in the joy of recognizing humanity in children as well as a new dominion in the male-female relationship. Woman will feel a lack of full unity with man, which is a type of inequality. This desire and dominion refer to the whole relationship, not just one-flesh union. The first mention of “husband” points to a fundamental loss in the original communion of persons, which was total and reciprocal, subordinated to the blessing of procreation. Man’s heart will now lust and dominion will ensue. The fall led to division among man and woman. *These words point to fact that man and woman will fail to satisfy the aspiration to realize in the conjugal union of the body the mutual communion of persons.* Man’s dominion seems to be the form of lust called “pride of life,” which changes essentially the structure of interpersonal communion. With the lust of the eyes and the flesh, it leads to making the human being an object.

- 10) Shame is not just in the body but in the spirit, in this insatiable “desire.” Shame reveals lust but can protect from the consequences of lust by covering up. Shame tries to keep man and woman in original innocence, protecting the nuptial meaning of the body from lust. There is still the desire for the other person, but the desire as well to protect from lust, which can direct desires to the satisfaction of the body rather than the communion of persons. For man, shame (fear), united with lust, becomes an impulse to “dominate” the woman. In the woman, lust leads her to seek the possession of the man as the object of her own desire and fosters his desire to dominate her.
- 11) The three forms of lust limit and distort the nuptial meaning of the body, the full awareness of the human being. The meaning of the body conditions the “way of living the body,” what man’s “heart” applies to the body. The “meaning” given to the body doesn’t change its essence, but is relevant to historical man’s morality. This is why Christ refers to the “heart.” Lust limits and distorts the body’s objective way of existing. Discovering what constitutes the distortion in the nuptial meaning of the body will allow us to describe what lust of the flesh involves.
- 12) After sin, femininity and masculinity ceased to be expressions aiming at interpersonal communion, remaining only objects of attraction. There was a certain coercion of the body limiting the expression of the spirit and the experience of exchange in the gift of the person. The human body has “almost” (but not completely) lost the capacity of expressing the love of mutual self-donation. This capacity is habitually threatened. The heart has become a battleground between love and lust. The more lust dominates the heart, the less there will be love, self-gift, and nuptial meaning. We need to keep the heart under control.
- 13) Since man can only discover himself in the sincere gift of himself, lust attacks this “sincere giving,” depriving man of the dignity of giving and depersonalizing him by making him an object for the other rather than someone willed for his own sake. Concupiscence makes the subjectivity of the person give way to the objectivity of the body. It reduces interpersonal relations to the body and sex and hinders the mutual acceptance of the other as a gift. It limits interiorly and reduces self-control, entailing the loss of the interior freedom of the gift, which is crucial for the nuptial meaning of the body. The sacramental aspect of the human body as an expression of the spirit is obscured and becomes an object of lustful appropriation. Concupiscence does not unite, but appropriates; the relationship of gift becomes one of possession. This is what is meant by “he shall rule over you.” Often this appropriation happens to the detriment of the woman, who senses it more. Man originally was to be the guardian of the reciprocity of donation and its true balance in his original acceptance of femininity as a gift.
- 14) As a consequence of lust, the body becomes almost a “ground” of appropriation of the other person, which entails a loss of the nuptial meaning of the body. One flesh union therefore acquires another meaning, that of possessing the other as an object. From possessing, the next step goes toward “enjoyment” and “use” of the other at my disposal. Concupiscence drives man toward possessing, enjoying and using the other as an object. This negates the nuptial meaning of the body, which is essentially disinterested.
- 15) Lust shows above all the state of the human spirit, which is a battleground of lust and love. There is a constant danger of seeing, evaluating and loving in a bodily (concupiscent) way, rather than in accord with the law of the mind (cf. Rom 7:23). We have to keep this anthropological element in mind to understand completely the appeal made by Christ to the human heart.

### C. The ethos of the Gospel and the sin of adultery



- 1) Jesus refers to the “hardness of heart” which led Moses to allow divorce. This hardness in man’s interiority brought about a situation contrary to God’s original plan. The sermon on the Mount proclaims the new ethos of the Gospel, which returns to the beginning. Jesus preaches it to historical man with his heart affected by the three forms of lust. Christ knows “what is in every man” (Jn 2:25). Christ was speaking to contemporaries as well as to us and to every human being individually.
- 2) The heart is affected by the three forms of lust, but this inner being of man also decides exterior human behavior. No study of human ethos can ignore the interior dimension.
- 3) (In the scene of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus refers not to the law but to conscience, to the one without sin. He clearly identifies adultery with sin. Conscience can be deeper and more correct than the content of a norm.)
- 4) Over the centuries the authentic content of the Law was subjected to the weaknesses of the human will deriving from the threefold concupiscence. Christ wants to recover the full meaning. Fulfillment is conditioned by a correct understanding. In OT, monogamy was given up for sake of numerous offspring, even by the Patriarchs. This would condition the understanding of “thou shalt not commit adultery.” David and Solomon practiced real polygamy based on concupiscence. Adultery was considered the possession of another man’s wife, and polygamy was not considered adultery. Monogamy as the essential and indispensable implication of “thou shalt not commit adultery” hadn’t become conscious. Christ wants to straighten out the errors of OT times. OT law sanctioned polygamy or concubinage. In trying to combat sin, it actually socially legalized another form of it. Christ had to bring it back to its original sense beyond traditional and legal restrictions.
- 5) In OT, even though the teaching on adultery was compromised by bodily concupiscence, there was clear teaching and penalties for homosexuality, bestiality and onanism. The OT put forth the procreative end of marriage overall.
- 6) Shame was codified and the physical manifestations of sexuality considered impure. The discovery of nudity was tantamount to an illicit sexual act. OT judgments are marked by an objectivity to order sexual life, especially social life, at the basis of which stands marriage and the family.
- 7) Prophets used the analogy of adultery to refer to the Chosen People’s infidelity to God by choosing various idols. Yahweh is an ever-faithful spouse, especially in Isaiah, Hosea and Ezekiel, and Israel a betraying bride. This will be important for discussion of marriage as sacrament. Hosea shows Israel’s betrayal as adulterous prostitution, and God’s forgiveness in wanting to betroth her forever, in justice, love, mercy, and faithfulness. There is also the threat that if she doesn’t turn back, God will strip her naked like the day she was born. Ezekiel picked up on the humiliating nudity of birth, talking about being tossed as a naked baby into an open field. Eventually the child grew and God covered her nakedness. But she trusted in her beauty and played the harlot and adulterous wife, receiving strangers instead of her husband. God’s faithfulness and choice of Israel naked is answered by numerous adultery.
- 8) In OT, adultery is a sin because it constitutes the breakdown of the personal covenant between man and woman. It’s a violation of man’s right of ownership. Monogamy appears as the only correct analogy of monotheism understood in categories of the covenant. Adultery is the antithesis of nuptial relationship. The marriage covenant constitutes the foundation of one-flesh union, which is a regular sign of the communion of two people. Adultery is a radical falsification of this sign. It is a “sin of the body,” a violation of nuptial covenantal love and interpersonal communion. It is a violation of the conjugal “one flesh” union, which occurs when man and woman who are not husband and wife (monogamously) unite in one flesh. This is not a truthful sign nor a true union of the body.
- 9) Christ talks about adultery committed in the heart, in contraposition to adultery committed in the body, shifting the meaning from the body to the heart. Christ speaks of the concupiscent, lusting man. The Wisdom tradition warned man against lust and about falling for beauty. Proverbs 6:25: “Do not desire her beauty in your heart.” It understood human psychology very well. Sirach 23:17-22 talked about the incessant fire that will consume a lustful man — his passions and then his heart, suffocating conscience — and that God sees everything, despite outward appearances of decency. Giving in to the passion doesn’t extinguish it, but makes it stronger until it kills man’s spirit.
- 10) God had prepared his people through prophets for Christ’s teaching on adultery and through wisdom literature for lust and “adultery in the heart.” Christ’s listeners were familiar with the wisdom tradition, but so would every man be who is familiar with lust. Christ stops before the internal act has become external.

A look expresses the interior man, and *intueri sequitur esse* (look follows being). Lust is an experience of value to the body lacking “nuptial” and procreative significance. Lust separates the body from its real meaning as the basis of communion. Concupiscence is an interior separation from nuptial meaning of the body. Lust in the heart obscures the significance of the body and the person.

- 11) Lust is “adultery committed in the heart.” It is a deception of the human heart in the perennial call to communion by means of mutual giving. Lust is not the perennial mutual attraction between man and woman, but reduces its significance. The mind and heart close down, and reduce all feminine (or masculine) values to the single value of sex as an object of gratification. A look can be lustful “knowledge” of the other, which the man uses. The woman ceases to have attraction as a person but only as an object to be used for man’s intentional (mental) gratification.
- 12) Christ, in speaking of the man who “looks lustfully,” notes not just man’s cognitive or psychological intentionality, but the intentionality of his existence. It changes the intentionality of his life! This deep change is meant by Jesus’ statement that he “has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” The heart and the will are changed. Cognitive intentionality is not yet slavery of the heart, but when the will follows, then lust dominates personal subjectivity and influences choosing and self-determination with regard to others. Man is consumed by its fire (Sirach) and loses the “freedom of the gift.” Man’s original desire “for” the other is distorted; he becomes a “taker” of the other, no longer a “giver to and for” the other. Mutual lust and use by man and woman do not correspond to the unity of “communion” but clash with it, pushing it toward utilitarian dimensions in which the other is merely an object to satisfy one’s own needs.

#### D. Rediscovering the true ethical values

- 1) Christ’s statement aims at constructing the new ethos of the Gospel and the rediscovery of those values lost by historical man. Christ’s mention of adultery of the heart (not externally in the flesh) is more than metaphorical. While it would seem logically to apply only to desires for a woman who is not one’s wife (with whom you could commit adultery in the body), Christ goes deeper to the moral evaluation of desire in relation to the personal dignity of man and woman, whether one is married to her or not. Christ refers to lusting after a “woman” as adultery in the heart.
- 2) Lust changes the intentionality of a woman’s existence “for” man, from a calling to communion to an object of the satisfaction of sexual need. The mutual “for” is distorted into utilitarianism. Even if he does not act on this exteriorly, he has already assumed this attitude in his heart. Man commits adultery in the heart with his wife when he treats her only as an object to satisfy instinct.
- 3) Christ wants the heart to be a place for the fulfillment of the law. The commandments must be kept in “purity of heart.” The severity of the prohibition against sin is shown by Christ’s figuratively speaking of “plucking out one’s eye” and “cutting off one’s hand” if they cause one to sin. This applies certainly to fighting what flows from the lust of the flesh. Christ wants to remove lust from the relationship between man and woman so that, in purity of heart, the nuptial meaning of the body and the person can shine in mutual self-giving and sacramental unity. Christ is bearing within and teaching the mystery of the “redemption of the body.” We should have confidence in the salvific power of Christ’s words.
- 4) Christ raises two crucial questions: (a) Is the heart accused or good? (b) How “can” and “must” man who accepts the Gospel ethos act? The two, of course, go together. There have been many opinions, from various sources.
  - a) Manichaeism distorted Christ’s words about adultery in the heart, because it considered matter, the body, sex and marriage evil. But Christ’s words must lead to an affirmation of the human body, which is essential for the proper ethos. Christ attacks lust, not the body. The body is a manifestation or sign of the spirit, i.e., a sacramental sign. The redemption of the body is not of an ontologically evil reality, but is of the clear sense of the nuptial meaning of the body and its interior mastery and freedom of spirit. The body and sexuality remain a “value not sufficiently appreciated” in man’s present historical state of fallen but redeemed nature. Christ’s words both “accuse” lust in the heart and “appeal to” the human heart to overcome it. The evil is lust, not the body. True victory over lust will come in rediscovering the true values of the object — the personal dignity of the body and of sexuality — rather than in considering the body evil as Manicheans do.

- b) The “masters of suspicion” — Ricoeur’s term describing Freud, Marx and Nietzsche — judged and accused the human “heart” by categories similar to the Johannine three forms of lust. Their thought continues to influence contemporary man. Nietzsche accused the human heart of “pride of life”; Marx of “lust of the eyes”; Freud, of “lust of the flesh.” Together they put the heart under continual suspicion, but the words of Christ do not allow us to stop here. Lust, although an important “coefficient” to understand man, is not the absolute criterion of anthropology and ethics.
- 5) We cannot be content with a theological conception of “lust” as a category, but must get to the “man of lust” and how he must respond. The ethos of redemption appeals to man to overcome lust and the continual “suspicion” and distrust of the human heart. Man is called to the redemption of the body, to realize the nuptial meaning of the body, to the interior freedom of the gift and the spiritual mastery of the lust of the flesh. Man is called to this by Christ’s words, but also from “inside” through the echo of man’s good “beginning.” The mystery of creation becomes the graced occasion of the mystery of redemption. Besides lust, man senses a deep need to preserve the dignity, beauty and love of mutual relations in the body. The meaning of the body is, in a sense, the antithesis of Freudian libido; the meaning of life is the antithesis of the interpretation of suspicion. Man is not just accused but called to rediscover the “heritage of his heart,” which is deeper than inherited sinfulness and lust in its three forms. Christ’s words — which are above all an appeal — reactivate that deeper heritage and give it real power in man’s life.
  - 6) Eros was mentioned in the first cycle of catecheses. It is a Greek mythological term that passed to Platonic philosophy and then to literature. For Plato eros drags man toward what is good, true and beautiful. Commonly it refers to a mostly sensual attraction toward union of bodies. Is this the same perennial attraction as we find in Gen 2:23-25? This is important for discussion of “lust” in Sermon on the Mount. Psychology and sexology define lust as the subjective intensity of straining towards the object because of its sexual value. The intensity of sexual attraction extends dominion over man’s emotional sphere. From a psychological point of view, this is eros in common language, which leads to “erotic” external manifestations. But “erotic” does not equal what “derives from desire” (serving to satisfy the lust of the flesh) for Christ, because that would involve a negative judgment on desire and attraction. In the larger sense, eros means mutual actions and behaviors through which man and woman approach each other to unite in one flesh. There is room for “ethos” in “eros,” according to Plato’s meaning (attracting toward true, good and beautiful), as well as for the theological content of Christ’s appeal to the human heart. This is the appeal to overcome the three forms of lust for what is true, good, and beautiful. This would be an ethical eros. Ethos opens us up to the full meaning of eros and prevents it from becoming lustful. Christ’s words are more than a prohibition, but a call to the deep and essential values this prohibition makes accessible and liberates, if we open our “heart” to them.
  - 7) Some say that ethos removes spontaneity from eros, and hence the two should be divorced. But full and mature spontaneity flows from the perennial attraction of masculinity and femininity. Christ’s words call man to a deep and mature consciousness of his own acts and impulses. He calls man to correct conscience, to master his impulses as a guardian, to draw from impulses what is fitting for “purity of heart” and the nuptial meaning. This requires that man learn the meaning of the body and of masculinity and femininity in his heart and distinguish them from lust. Mature man is called “spontaneously” to respond to these deeper meanings with interior sensitivity, so that they not be lustful. But this spontaneity must flow through true self-control. This is a spontaneity the carnal man knows nothing about. Christ’s words lead to a true spontaneity, which doesn’t suffocate but frees and facilitates authentic human desires.
  - 8) Interior man is the subject of the “new” ethos of the body Christ proclaims, new in comparison to the OT, to the historical man of lust, and therefore to every man. This is the ethos of the redemption of the body, which, with “adoption as sons” St. Paul presents as the eschatological fruit of Christ’s redemptive work. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ speaks in the perspective of redemption in bringing man beyond the three forms of lust back to the beginning. Christ doesn’t call man back to the state of original innocence, but to the rediscovery of what is truly “human.” There is a connection between the beginning and the redemption, because Christ leads man to the fullness of justice. The new man can emerge when the ethos of the redemption of the body dominates lust through self-mastery, by means of temperance (continence of desires). This continence isn’t empty, but filled through self-mastery with nuptial meaning of body and perennial attraction of man and woman through masculinity and femininity toward communion. This self-mastery may seem “empty” at first, but man rediscovers eventually his own dignity.

The human person learns to love truly. Purity is a requirement of love, and when the heart is pure, the man is pure, and he overcomes historical sinfulness and aspires to perfection through redemption of body. This purity is a reminiscence of original solitude in which the male was liberated through opening to the woman.

- 9) Purity of heart must mark mutual relations between man and woman both within and outside of marriage. Lust is opposed to purity. The pure of heart shall see God. The heart is the source of purity and lust. Sins of the heart defile a man (cf. Mt 15:18-20: "What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man."). Man can be dirty ("impure") and hence needs to be washed. In OT there were the ritual ablutions, which acquired religious meaning as ritual "purity." But this was not moral purity, which comes from man's heart, and not his hands, being cleaned. Moral good is manifestation of purity; moral evil, of impurity. Impurity is larger than concupiscence, but this is a specific type of it.
- 10) St. Paul does not use the Johannine categories of the three types of lust, but he does share a contrast between what is "of the Father" and "of the world," in the opposition between "flesh" and the "Spirit" (meaning Holy Spirit). The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit (Gal 5:16). "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5). The type of purity of heart to which Jesus referred in the Sermon on the Mount is realized in life "according to the spirit."

## **IIB. St. Paul's Teaching on the Human Body: Life according to the Spirit**

### **A. What life according to the spirit consists of**

- 1) There is a tension in man's interiority or heart between two elements present from man's beginning, which, after sin, oppose each other, between body and spirit. Paul uses "flesh" to coincide with the Johannine threefold lust, which often wins against the Spirit. "Flesh" refers in Paul to the man who is "interiorly" subjected to the "world," its secularism and sensualism. The Spirit wants the opposite of what the flesh wants. Life according to the Spirit is a synthesis and program.
- 2) In Romans 8:5-10, this distinction between flesh and spirit is phrased in terms of justification. One who lives according to the Spirit sets the mind on the things of the Spirit, and Christ is alive in them. Paul returns to the first sin and its legacy of death, while anticipating the final victory of Christ over sin and death. This victory will give life to our mortal bodies through the indwelling Spirit. This justification is a real power operating in man that is revealed in actions. This power enables justice "to abound" in man.
- 3) The contrast between life of the flesh and of the spirit is seen in the works or fruits of each (Gal 5:19-23). This is a contrast between the threefold lust and the ethos of redemption, which is the Spirit operating in man. Behind the fruits of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control — there is moral virtue, choice, the effort of the will, and the help of the Spirit against three-fold lust. They are more "fruit" of the Spirit's action than the "work" of man. Self-control is particularly important to our reflections.
- 4) In St. Paul's list of works of the flesh, he lists specifically carnal sins (fornication, impurity, licentiousness, drunkenness, carousing) as well as "sensual" sins (idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy). These are sins of the "spirit of man" coming from each of the three-fold lusts. For St. Paul, following Christ, real purity comes from man's heart and concerns more than the sexual. As he writes to Titus, "To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted. They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds ..." (Tit 1:15 f.). There is the call to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit in order to live (Rom 8:12-13). This is the same appeal Christ made to the human heart to control its desires. This is the indispensable condition to life according to the Spirit, which is the antithesis of death. Life according to the flesh, by contrast, involves the death of the Spirit. This is what is meant by a "mortal" sin. This is why St. Paul says those who do the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom (Gal 5:21). Life according to the Spirit is true freedom to love our neighbor (Gal 5:13-14). Man obtains justification in "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6), from the "Spirit." Paul appeals to them to free themselves from a "carnal" exterior concept of justification for freedom in Christ. We understand purity of heart in this way.
- 5) The whole law is fulfilled in the Gospel commandment of charity. The new Gospel ethos appeals to man freely to choose this love. Paul, like Christ, stresses that freedom is for love. Christ set us free so that we

might love freely. This is the vocation to freedom, in which life according to the Spirit is realized. But the choice is ours: "Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another (Gal 5:13). We can misuse freedom against the Spirit. Living according to the flesh negates this use of freedom for which Christ set us free. We return to the "yoke" of the three-fold lust. Man no longer is suited to the real gift of himself in freedom according to the nuptial meaning of his body.

#### B. Purity of heart

- 1) In 1 Thess 4:3-5, Paul calls man to holiness, which is the real purity of heart: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathens who do not know God." He contrasts "holiness" to "uncleanness" (v. 7). Purity is a virtue, or capacity, for self-control. It must be rooted in the will, or as St. Thomas Aquinas says, in the concupiscible appetite. Purity contains the impulse of sensitive desires and is a form of temperance. But purity also allows for controlling the body in "holiness and honor." This abstinence and control are mutually dependent; one is impossible without the other. It overcomes the flesh for the sake of the Spirit. The Pauline notion of purity is right, complete and adequate. It is not just a virtue, but a fruit and manifestation of life according to the Spirit.
- 2) To understand Paul better, we have to understand his use of "honor," which is a key to "holiness." It is a spiritual power that helps man act [doubtless connected with nuptial meaning of body and call to communion in love]. In 1 Cor 12:18-25, Paul says about the Mystical Body of Christ, "God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another." For Paul, the human body is worthy of honor, because man prescientifically "is" that body, [which is the sign or sacrament of the person]. The body deserves honor because of its holiness flowing from the mysteries of creation and redemption.
- 3) Paul's mention of the "weaker" or "unpresentable parts" of the human body evoke the shame flowing from original sin in the historical man subjected to the three-fold lust. But in shame, too, there is an echo of man's original innocence and hence shame fosters "respect" for the body in "holiness and honor." Paul says "God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor, to the inferior parts, that there may be no discord in the body." The original state of man had no such discord, which historical man knows. There was an original harmony (purity) of the "heart," which enabled man and woman to experience happily and simply the uniting power of their bodies, which was the substratum of their *communio personarum*. Paul recommends greater "modesty" concerning what is "unpresentable" in man to overcome this "discord in the body."
- 4) In these two letters, St. Paul reveals the Christian virtue of purity as an effective way to become detached from the fruit of lust of the flesh in the human heart. According to Paul, purity is a "capacity" centered on the dignity of the person in relation to the (femininity or masculinity which is manifested in his or her) body. It is a fruit of life according to the Spirit. The moral dimension (virtue) and the charismatic dimension (the gift of the HS) are closely connected.
- 5) The body is called to be the "temple" of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Right before this, he says, "Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body." These sins are against the "holiness" and "honor" of the body. Such sins "profane" the body, and therefore the temple of the HS. Because of the indwelling of God in the person, man's body is not "his own." The HS is another source of the dignity of the body and of the moral duty flowing from this dignity. In the redemption, Christ has imprinted on the body a new dignity, since the body with the soul has been admitted to union with the Person of the Son through the redemption of the body. Man was bought "with a price" (6:20). This brings about the duty of controlling one's body in holiness and honor. The fruit of redemption is the HS, who dwells in man and his body as in a temple. The body is therefore not meant for "immorality" but "for the Lord" and "the Lord for the body" (6:13).
- 6) In the Incarnation, the human body becomes the body of the God-man. In Christ, the human body receives a new supernatural elevation, which must impact human behavior with regard to his and others' bodies. The redemption of the body involves a new measure of the holiness of the body, to which St. Paul refers in drastic terms: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take

the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh' But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1Cor 6:15-17). We are called to this unity of spirit with Christ in the body.

- 7) The indwelling of the HS in the temple of the human body bears fruit in the man who lives according to the Spirit. The gift of piety serves purity, making the human subject sensitive to that dignity of the human body by virtue of creation and redemption. This helps us to reverence God in the body and realize we are not our own. This involves abstention from "immorality," but also involves love, according to the image and likeness of God. Paul says, "So glorify God in your body" (v. 20). Purity is the glory of the human body before God. The dignity of love in interpersonal relations glorifies God. From purity flows beauty, which leads to simplicity, cordiality, and personal trust in love. The connection of purity with love and purity-in-love with piety is a little known part of the theology of the body we will take up later.
- 8) Paul's thought shows a continuity with the wisdom tradition. "Lord, remove from me evil desire" (Sir 23:4), etc. Purity is a condition for finding wisdom and following it. "Through purification, I found her" (Sir 51:20). Wisdom also leads to purity. This was a preparation for the Pauline doctrine of purity as "life according to the Spirit."
- 9) In summary, this purity of heart is the positive good which is opened by the overcoming of desire (through the "negative" side of temperance). It is the true freedom from lust. St. Paul's description of "life according to the Spirit" gives a complete image of Christ's words on the purity of the heart. Christ's words contain ethical and anthropological truth and hence are important for the theology of the body. They are realistic; they do not call man to the state of original innocence, but indicate to him the path to purity in the state of hereditary sinfulness through life according to the Spirit and the redemption of the body carried out by Christ. Purity of heart allows man to rediscover and realize the nuptial value of the body. The pure man enjoys the fruits of victory over lust through controlling the body in holiness and honor. The gift of piety allows man to treat his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and experience the joy of mastering himself and giving himself to others.

#### C. The role of the magisterium in teaching about the human heart

- 1) Christ's words to the human "heart" and to the "beginning" teach us about man and enable us to outline a theology of the body. Christ gives us a pedagogy of the body, from which this theology is derived. Man is called to follow it. God has assigned a task to the human body, to bring the person into loving communion of persons. This theology is the best and fundamental method of the pedagogy of the body, because it focuses not just on biological processes, but on the body's dignity and purpose. It is a "spirituality of the body." Biological understanding of the body can actually obscure the meaning of the body unless it is accompanied by this spiritual understanding.
- 2) The modern Church's pronouncements understand, interpret and apply Christ's teaching to present situations. *Gaudium et Spes* (II,I) and *Humanae Vitae* must be studied about the dignity of marriage and the family, and *reread according to the theology and pedagogy of the body found in Christ's words*. GS talked about problems of polygamy, divorce, free-love, selfishness, hedonism and contraception. HV talked about the harm to women from contraception. To them, Christ speaks about the unity and indissolubility of marriage, and Paul about purity of heart and mastering the lust of the flesh. HV spoke about mastering our instincts by reason, free will, asceticism and the practice of periodic continence. The theology of the body — especially the dignity of persons, the relationship between ethos and eros, and purity of heart— is "indispensable" for understanding all that Paul VI wrote.
- 3) The Gospel of purity of heart, yesterday and today, concludes this cycle of considerations.

#### D. Creating an atmosphere favorable to education in chastity (HV 22) in art.

- 1) Before moving to the next cycle, the Pope focuses on the problem of the ethos of the body in works of artistic culture, within the context of the education in chastity in modern life.
- 2) Christ's focus on the "heart" shows that man's personal subjectivity is indispensable in the theological hermeneutics of the human body. Both the objective reality of the body and subjective "experience" of the body (as male and female) are found in the Bible and in theological reflection. Most problems of the "ethos of the body" involve both objective and subjective elements.

- 3) Works of art enable the extension of “being a body” and “experiencing the body” outside of individual men. Man meets the reality of the body and experiences it in works of art. Man’s looking at this reality cannot be isolated from Christ’s words about purity of heart. All of aesthetic experience exists within the area of the ethos of the body and we rightly think of creating a culture favorable to purity. The objective works of culture — spoken and written words, visual representations — can threaten or enhance this purity.
- 4) The human body is a perennial object of culture because the person is. There is an obvious “objectification” of the body in works of art: sometimes *living* (theater, ballet, concerts), sometimes as a *model* (sculpture or painting), or sometimes as the *reproduction* of living man (photography or film). This distinction in photography, film and television is important for the ethos of the body, because often the content of representation and transmission loses contact with the person whose body is a sign. Often the person is an anonymous object that can be diffused throughout the world. This can lead to objectification.
- 5) The naked human body in the whole truth of its masculinity or femininity has the meaning of a gift of the person to a person. The ethos of the body is connected with the nuptial reciprocity of that gift. The objectification of the naked human body in art goes outside of and uproots this original configuration to interpersonal donation and loses the deeply subjective meaning of the gift. This does not mean that the human body cannot be the subject of works of art, but that *this problem of the naked body is not just aesthetic, but moral.*
- 6) The discussion of shame in historical man showed us the specific necessity of privacy with regard to their own bodies. In the heart of man, subject to lust, this necessity serves to ensure the gift and possibility of mutual donation. Cultures cover private parts not for climate but to help man’s personal sensitivity grow. This shows the explicit continuity of the nuptial meaning of the body in historical man. Original shame is a permanent element of culture and morals and belongs to the genesis of the ethos of the human body. Nakedness in concentration camps was meant to destroy personal sensitivity and the sense of human dignity. Mature men can surpass the limit of that shame for medical reasons. The anonymous nakedness of a man-object contrasts with progress in a human, moral culture. Personal sensitivity means man does not wish to become an object for others in anonymous nakedness, not to objectify another in this way, except when he is giving in to lust.
- 7) When does human nakedness become pornography or pornovision?
  - a) When personal sensitivity with regard to human body is overstepped;
  - b) When in art or media, the right to privacy of the person in masculinity or femininity is violated; and
  - c) When the deep governing rules of the gift and mutual donation inscribed in masculinity and femininity toward the communion of persons are violated.
- 8) These pornographic abuses can happen only in the intentional order of the reproduction and representation. Man is offended because such representation is divorced from interpersonal relationship. Naturalists, who want “everything that is human” in works of art, actually don’t seek it, because what is most human is the destination toward the gift which would protect the body in privacy. If the “element of the gift” is suspended in a dimension of unknown reception and unforeseen response, it is threatened in the order of intention as an anonymous object of abusive “appropriation.” The truth about man and the meaning of his body creates precise limits that are unlawful to exceed. These limits must be recognized and respected by artists who make the body the object, model or subject of art; otherwise the values of the human body can be distorted and destroyed in man’s heart. The Latin word was “*obscaena*,” what should not be before the eyes of spectators.
- 9) The artist needs to be aware of the full truth of the object and the whole scale of values, which he must live and not just take into account. This corresponds to his purity of heart. Art is meant to express the creative idea of the artist and his interior world of values. The viewer sees not just the object, but the creator and the creator’s ideas. Ancient Greek sculpture focused on the naked human body in such a way as to allow the contemplation of the whole mysterious truth about man and the supra-sensual beauty of masculinity and femininity. We’re not drawn to “lust” after these works. Other works offend our personal sensitivity by their intentional and reductive objectification of the human body to a instrument of enjoyment and for the satisfaction of concupiscence. This is contrary to man’s dignity in the intentional order of art and in reproduction.

10) We have to discuss the ethos of the “image” and the correlative ethos of “seeing.” The creation of an atmosphere conducive to chastity education involves both. The creation of the image is both aesthetic and ethical; likewise looking imposes obligations on the recipient of the work. True and responsible artistic activity tries to overcome the anonymity of the human body as an object “without choice” seeking to portray the truth about man in his feminine and masculine corporeity. This is a task of the viewer, who cannot become just a “consumer of impressions,” exploiting the meaning of the anonymous body.

### IIIa. Christ Appeals to the Resurrection

A. Christ's words on the levirate law and resurrection (Mt 22:24-30; Mk 12: 18-27; Lk 20:27-40 based on Deut 25:5-10)

- 1) This is the third element of the “trptych” of the words of Christ that are essential and constitutive for the theology of the body. Christ gives the revelation of historical man's body by going first to the beginning, then to the heart, to the resurrection. Christ's words on the resurrection open up a new truth about man and clarifies several other things:
  - a) Sadducees know neither scriptures nor the power of God; they are “quite wrong.” They first don't know what Scripture says about resurrection (a methodical error for those who were its interpreters), and then do not accept what God is capable of (a substantial error). The mere literal understanding of Scripture is not enough; there has to be an introduction to the living God. God is not bound by the law of death. They tried to deprive God of the power of resurrection. Christ bears witness to the God of life.
  - b) Quoting Moses, Jesus says God is of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, “not of the dead, but the living.” This was eight verses before God said, “I am who am,” (Ex 3:14). Christ refers to the burning bush. Access to the Living God was never curtailed, who, through covenants, was making access to the tree of life possible again.
  - c) There is no “marrying or giving in marriage” in heaven, “for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” Resurrection is in conformity with the living God. Marrying and giving in marriage is bound exclusively to this “age.” There will be masculinity and femininity, but a different purpose to its generative purpose.
  - d) There is the enunciation about the future resurrection of the body and the enunciation about the state of the body of risen man.
- 2) Christ will give the definitive answer to the Sadducees' query with his own resurrection, but he refers to the OT in his response. Christ is God's ultimate word on the subject and seals the everlasting covenant by his death and resurrection.
- 3) Marriage and procreation constitute the “beginning” but not the eschatological future of man. They lose their *raison d'être*; at the eschaton, the number of human beings created in God's image and likeness is closed. Earthly history is ended. The resurrection refers not just to the recovery of corporeity and integral human life of body and soul, but to a completely new state of human life. There is a new condition of the human body (otherwise the resurrection would be meaningless). Man will become like or equal to angels not through disincarnation but through a **spiritualization** of his somatic nature and a new harmonious submission of the body to spirit. The spirit will fully permeate the body and the body will subordinate to it without opposition. This will be man's perfect “realization,” when the primacy of the “spirit” will be achieved.
- 4) There will also be a “divinization” of man's humanity. The “sons of the resurrection” will be “sons of God.” Participation in God's interior life will reach its peak in man's nature. There will be a new formation and accentuation of man's subjectivity in union with the communion of persons who is the Trinity. Man's experience of God's truth and love “face to face” will be much greater than in this life.
- 5) Christ seems to reveal a new “nuptial” meaning to the resurrected body, the “virginal” meaning of being male and female. This involves an understanding of the “vision,” truth and love of heaven. God's self-communication to man involves this “vision” of the mystery of the Triune God, and will involve the content and “form” of man's whole existence. Man will participate in God's life not through faith but through vision.



- 6) God created man male and female, envisaging a unity through this duality that he linked with procreation. Procreation will no longer be present in the future world, but Christ does not state that they will not be male and female. The meaning of male and female can be sought in creation, but in something other than marriage and procreation. Man's original solitude revealed him as a person in order to "reveal" the communion of persons in the unity of the two. In both states, the person is in the image and likeness of God. The original (virginal) meaning of the body is for life in communion of persons. Marriage and procreation give concrete reality to that meaning in history. In heaven, the nuptial meaning of the body will correspond to man's being created in the image and likeness of God (personal) and realized in the communion of persons (communitarian). This will be the fulfillment of man's earthly life. The freedom of the gift of communion that comprises the communion of saints will be simple and splendid.
- 7) The words of Christ indicate the eschatological perfection of the body, fully subject to the divinizing depth of the vision of God "face to face", in which it will find its inexhaustible source of perpetual "virginity" (united to the nuptial meaning of the body), and of the perpetual "intersubjectivity" of all men, who will share (as males and females) in the resurrection.

#### B. The Pauline anthropology of the Resurrection

- 1) Paul personally knew of the fact of Christ's resurrection and of his resurrected body; whereas Christ didn't refer to it in his answer to the Sadducees, Paul does use it in 1 Cor 15 to someone who, like the Sadducees, denies the resurrection. If Christ weren't raised, our faith would be in vain; but he has been raised. The resurrection is God's response to the historical inevitability of death after the fall. For Paul, Christ's resurrection is the beginning of eschatological fulfillment. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor 15:26).
- 2) Paul contrasts the resurrected body — which is imperishable, glorious, full of power, incorruptible, spiritual — with the historical body, and the first Adam (beginning) with the Last Adam (Christ), who is a life-giving spirit (end). Thereby Paul reproduces Christ's synthesis about the beginning, about the human heart, and about the other world. He mentions the creation of Adam (Adam's becoming a living being) and the corrupting effects of original sin (perishable... weak... in dishonor... decay). Creation "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22) for the revealing of the sons of God, the liberation from decay and the glorious freedom of God's children (Rom 5:19-21). There's the same hope as in childbirth: "we grow inwardly as we await adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:23). Paul announces the contemplation of this redemption in resurrection.
- 3) Paul writes using antitheses. In contrasting Adam and Christ, Paul shows the poles of the mystery of creation and redemption in which man's life is in tension. We will one day bear the image of the "man of heaven," the fulfillment of the "man of earth." There is an inner potential in earthly man for this glorious incorruptible image of the second Adam. Every man in the image of Adam is called to bear in himself the image of Christ.
- 4) Paul calls the earthly body weak, meaning not only perishable and subject to death, but that it is an animal body. The resurrected, spiritual body will be full of power, because it will be inherited from Christ. This antinomy refers to the whole of man, not just his body. This will be a restitution not to the beginning but to a new fullness. In earthly man, the "animal" (physical) body dominates; in heavenly man, the spirit prevails. This is not an anthropological (soul/body) dualism, but a basic antinomy (Spirit vs. flesh). This latter distinct pervades all of Paul's anthropology.

### IIIb. Virginity or celibacy "for the sake of the kingdom"

#### A. Christ's words on the vocation to continence

- 1) The exclusive donation of self to God in virginity and celibacy has deep roots in the theology of the body, in the beginning and in the resurrection of the body. Christ's reference to heaven indicates a life without marriage in which man and woman find the fullness of personal gift and communion of persons through glorification in eternal union with God. This is where celibacy for the sake of the kingdom is grounded. But there remains an essential difference between continence in this world and heavenly life.
- 2) After Christ speaks out about divorce and the disciples responded that it is "not expedient to marry," (Mt 19:10), Christ describes those who have voluntarily made themselves "eunuchs for the Kingdom of

Heaven.” Continenence is not in opposition to marriage. Continenence is not chosen because marriage is inexpedient but positively for the value of the kingdom. Christ mentions that it is a gift, that the one to whom this precept was given should receive it. This is a counsel concerning some, not a command which binds all.

- 3) Christ does not directly link continence for the Kingdom with the other world in which there will be no marriages. But they are within the context of the “beginning,” and of conjugal unity. Continenence is an “exception” to the general rule of this life, in anticipation of the eschatological life without marriage. It is not a question of continence *in* the Kingdom, but *for* the Kingdom.
- 4) Christ distinguishes three categories of eunuchs: one congenital from birth; a second made so by men; the third voluntary and supernatural “for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven.” No tradition in OT of celibacy or virginity, and it was considered a curse (as with daughter of Jephthah, Jdg 11:37). Marriage and procreation had consecrated significance in Abraham. Christ presents the virginal meaning of the body to his disciples. This was a decisive turning point. To disciples, eunuchs were deficient; Christ proposes the voluntary and supernatural model of the body’s significance. No reaction from the disciples is recorded, but it permeates the writings of St. Paul. There must be supernatural finality to continence, otherwise we’re dealing with something else. It involves renunciation and determined spiritual effort: “they have made themselves eunuchs.”
- 5) Continenence for the kingdom is a charismatic, eschatological sign pointing to the resurrection when people will no longer marry and God will be everything to everyone. This is the eschatological “virginity” of the risen man, in whom we see the absolute and eternal nuptial meaning of the glorified body in union with God through the face to face vision of him, as well as the perfect intersubjectivity of the communion of saints. This sign points to the redemption of the body and bears, above all, the imprint of the likeness of Christ, who himself made this choice for the Kingdom.

#### B. Mary’s and Christ’s examples

- 1) Christ was born of a virgin, from the virginal maternity of Mary. This virginal conception and birth were hidden from men. Mary and Joseph are the first witnesses of a fruitfulness of the Spirit — that which is conceived in her is of the HS (Mt 1:20) — not of the flesh. Joseph and Mary were united in perfect communion of persons in marriage and at the same time continent for the Kingdom of heaven, which was fruitful in the HS. The Son of God was conceived and born as a man from a virginal mother. Mary’s divine maternity is the revelation of that fruitfulness in the HS to which man freely submits his spirit and body “for the Kingdom.”
- 2) Christ’s disciples didn’t know about his divine conception and birth when he spoke to them for the first time. They could understand his words only on the basis of his personal example. Only slowly did they realize the spiritual fecundity from the HS in man who is continent for the sake of the Kingdom. Christ shows continence is a particularly effective and privileged way to enter the kingdom. This has decisive meaning for the ethos and theology of the body. Christ chose it for himself, not because it is “not expedient to marry,” but “for the kingdom.” This “for the kingdom” has both objective (the reality of the state) and subjective (motivational) importance. To be spiritually fruitful in the HS, continence must be willed and chosen through faith to identify with the truth and reality of that kingdom now. Such continence bears and participates in the dynamism of the redemption of the body and features a particular likeness to Christ.

#### C. Relationship between marriage and continence

- 1) Christ says only those “to whom it is given” can understand this gift, but this understanding “for the kingdom” involves the motivation which influences the choice of continence, “making himself a eunuch.” This motivation is supernatural. Christ doesn’t hide the anguish involved in such a decision. It seems to be against the beauty of the vocation of man, male and female, and marriage and procreation. God said “it is not good for man to be alone.” But marriage and continence shed light on each other. Man in the beginning was not only “dual” but “alone” before God with God, called to the communion of persons. The call to continence preserves these truths. Man is called to “break away” from what causes him to marry toward continence as a call and gift for the Kingdom. Continenence is a second way of responding to man’s original solitude toward an even fuller form of intersubjective communion with others, through the

development of God's image and likeness in its Trinitarian meaning. This continence for the Kingdom allows man to fulfill himself "differently" and "more" than through matrimony, becoming a true gift toward others. Man in freely choosing to respond to the gift of continence, renounces the divinely-instituted goods of marriage, procreation and children. Breaking away from these goods for the Kingdom involves self-sacrifice, which then extends to the community, including parents.

- 2) In the "historical" man who chooses continence voluntarily for the Kingdom, there is still the heritage of the threefold concupiscence. He, like someone who is married, must subjugate sinfulness in his nature through the redemption of the body.
- 3) Christ does not explicitly affirm the superiority of the "exceptional" vocation of continence for the Kingdom, although he establishes it implicitly. Paul talks about the "better" state of the choice of continence (1Cor 7:38). This superiority doesn't disparage matrimony, nor conjugal "union in the body," but is based on the motive of the Kingdom. Nor does it establish two "camps" in Christian life. Calling continence a "state of perfection" deals with all the counsels, corresponding to Christ's call to perfection (Mt 19:21). Perfection in Christian life is measured by charity, and individual married people can achieve higher states than individual, continent religious. The values of marriage and continence interpenetrate each other. Perfect conjugal love must be marked by faithful self-giving to Jesus the Bridegroom. Continence must express conjugal love in total gift of oneself to God. Both express the conjugal meaning of the body. Continence must lead to spiritual "paternity" or "maternity" analogously to conjugal love. Physical procreation must also be spiritual fatherhood and motherhood, seen in the education of children. St. Paul says, "Each has his special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another" (1 Cor 7:7).

#### D. The kingdom of heaven

- 1) Christ spoke of the kingdom of heaven, or of God, as both "now" and "not yet," as present and future. The temporal establishment is its preparation for definitive fulfillment. Christ calls the supernaturally continent to participate singularly in the establishment of the Kingdom on earth. They renounce oneself, take up their Cross every day and follow Christ in renouncing marriage and family to contribute more greatly to the realization of the kingdom of God in its earthly dimension pointing to eschatological fulfillment. Christ himself doesn't explain explicitly why continence is helpful for the establishment of the kingdom. Everyone is invited to the kingdom and everybody is called to work for it. But continence for the Kingdom has a clear value in Christ's thought. Just as those who choose marriage must do as it was instituted "in the beginning" by the Creator, so someone who pursues continence for the Kingdom must likewise seek the values proper to that vocation.
- 2) The kingdom of Heaven is the definitive fulfillment of the aspirations of all men and of the goodness of God's bounty toward man. There are many NT passages about it. To understand what it is for those choosing it in voluntary continence, we have to understand the nuptial relationship of Christ with the Church. Eph 5:25ff is crucial both for the theology of marriage as well as for that of continence for the kingdom. There is a desire to share in the redeeming work of Christ. In love, one is ready to give oneself exclusively for the sake of the Kingdom, while from temporal categories continence is a renunciation. First the disciples and then the whole Tradition will discover that the love which makes this renunciation possible is referred to Christ himself as the Spouse of the Church, the Spouse of souls, to whom Christ has given himself to the limit. Continence for the kingdom is a particular response of love for the Divine Spouse, that has acquired the meaning of nuptial love, reciprocating the nuptial love of the Redeemer. This giving of oneself is understood as renunciation but made above all out of love.
- 3) This analysis, first of marriage "from the beginning" then of continence for the Kingdom allows us to recall and reread the nuptial meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity. This nuptial meaning of the body is not reducible to animals' "sexual instinct," which neglects the interpersonal reality of human subjectivity. In continence for the Kingdom, not only "sexual instinct" is involved but the "freedom of the gift" in mature knowledge of the nuptial meaning of the body. Only in relation to the masculine and feminine "for-the-other" does voluntary supernatural continence find full motivation in response to the "gift" that is "received." Man and woman can therefore — on the basis of the same personal disposition and same nuptial meaning — give themselves freely and totally to Christ. This latter gift to Christ cannot be made without knowledge of the nuptial meaning of one's life in masculinity or femininity. If continence is based on anything less, it would not correspond adequately to Christ's words.

- 4) For continence to be conscious, mature and voluntary, an authentic knowledge of nuptial disposition of masculinity and femininity to marriage is necessary. Man must know what he is renouncing. But fully conscious renunciation is not enough; it paradoxically must be an affirmation of good of marriage. Continence affirms nuptial meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity. This renunciation helps everyone to recognize the nuptial meaning of the body in the ethos of human, conjugal and family life. Christ, the Spouse of the Church (Eph 5:22-23), shows the meaning of the sacramentality of marriage, though he was a virgin and “eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Christ points to the dignity of the personal gift bound to the nuptial meaning of the body. Christ’s call to continence for the Kingdom is crucial for Christian ethos, spirituality, anthropology and the theology of the body. How the call to continence and the nuptial meaning of the body in continence is formed and transformed needs to be answered, and the relationship between marriage and celibacy, need to be studied more in depth, but will not be here.

#### E. St. Paul’s treatment of virginity and marriage

- 1) Paul fully presents the truth proclaimed by Christ, but gives it his own stamp and personal interpretation. His tone is magisterial and pastoral, based on life and teaching of Christ. Like Christ (Mt 19:11-12), Paul emphasizes that virginity or voluntary continence derives from a counsel, not a commandment. “With regard to virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion” (1Cor 7:25). He gives his opinion to those already married, to those making a decision and to widows. This models Christ’s teaching first on marriage and its indissolubility and then on continence for the Kingdom, but the style is Paul’s.
- 2) Paul states in 1 Cor 7:36-38, that if passions are strong, he should marry, which is no sin. He who marries does well; he who refrains does better. Sin is not involved in either choice. To understand Paul’s fuller teaching on marriage, we need to turn to Ephesians. Paul says that one who chooses continence does “better” because “the time is already short... and this world is passing away.” Paul uses his own experience “I wish that all were as I myself am” (1Cor 7:7). He also mentions sparing them “troubles in the flesh” and for a man not to touch a woman.” Paul is realistic about marriage, that alongside joys it does bring “troubles,” often of a moral nature. He mentions “it is better to marry than to burn” (v. 8-9) and the “danger of incontinence” (v. 1-2). There’s no Manicheism here. Christ talked about the sacrifice of making oneself a eunuch; Paul the troubles of marriage.
- 4) Paul’s comments about the transient character of the temporal world prepares the ground for his teaching on continence for the Kingdom: “The unmarried person is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord.” This is parallel to “eunuch... for the kingdom.” The affair of the Lord is the establishment of the kingdom. The kingdom is the “better part” that Mary chose (Lk 10:41) and that disciples should “seek first” (Lk 12:31). Paul describes his own anxiety for the Churches (2Cor 11:28). The unmarried can totally dedicate his mind, toil, and heart to the kingdom, to the whole world, to the Church (which is Christ’s kingdom). Paul wishes we were all like him in this. The anxiety itself is a gift of the Lord. “To please the Lord” is a synthesis of holiness, and is a motivation for continence. Christ said, “I always do what is pleasing to him (the Father)” (Jn 8:99). To be “anxious” about the Lord’s affairs is to please him, as Christ did at 12 being found in the temple. It has love as its foundation. Man always tries to please the person he loves. Paul says the continent man tries to please God, whereas the married man tries to please his wife and vice versa. The married man “is divided” by reason of family obligations. An unmarried man would be “integrally” capable to dedicate himself completely to the service of the Kingdom, “in order to be holy in body and spirit.” An unmarried man without the goal of the kingdom might be “divided” by emptiness. The unmarried person for the Kingdom follows Christ and is united with him in temptations, sufferings and joy. Holiness for Paul is a state not an action, first ontological then moral. It is a separation from what is not subject to God’s influence. Holiness in “body and spirit” is this state of separation in continence for God’s kingdom. Paul proposes another “world” of values, that last beyond the transient world.
- 5) Paul mentions “each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind, and one of another” (v. 7). Those who live marriage receive a “gift” from God, as do the continent for the Kingdom. Whereas Paul stresses concupiscence, he also stresses elsewhere its sacramental and “charismatic” character, as a grace and gift.

- 6) He reminds everyone that “the form of this world is passing away.” The kingdom of God, and not the world, is man’s eternal destiny. This is the theology of great expectation. Marriage is tied to the “form of this world.” The Christian must live marriage in view of this definitive vocation. The continent lives already in great expectation, according to this definitive vocation; this, by “pleasing the Lord” and being “anxious” about His affairs, is why he does “better.” Marriage and continence are both destined for “future life,” where both will be fulfilled. Both dimensions of the human vocation are complementary, furnishing a full answer to the fundamental human question of the significance of “being a body,” masculine or feminine. The theology of the body looks to the “beginning,” to historical man’s “heart,” but also to the resurrection, to answer the question of “being a body” in reference to the “other world.”
- 7) The pastoral realism of the Pauline theology of the body is revealed in 1 Corinthians. He stresses that “your body is a temple of the HS” (1Cor6:19), at the same time mentioning weakness, sinfulness and concupiscence, within the context of the Lord’s gift. In both marriage and continence, grace makes the body a “temple of the HS,” as long as the person does not “dishonor” this temple. Paul is also realistic about marriage, saying that husband and wife should give each other their “conjugal rights,” since they do not rule their bodies exclusively (v. 3-4), and lest Satan tempt them through lack of self-control (v. 5-6). We’ll return to these thoughts later. He mentions voluntary and periodic abstinence “for prayer” as a fruit of this “gift of God.”

#### F. Mystery of body’s redemption as basis of teaching on marriage and voluntary continence

- 1) In Rom 8, Paul says “we groan inwardly as we await... the redemption of the body” and the “revelation” of the “glorious liberty of the children of God.” The redemption of the body is the object of hope, planted in the proto-evangelium (Gen 3:15). This hope of salvation has its anthropological dimension in man’s redemption, but also a cosmic dimension, redeeming the whole of creation. Christ revealed man to himself by making him aware of his sublime vocation (GS 22). Christ speaks of and fulfills this hope especially by his death and resurrection. This is hope for the “glorious freedom of God’s children.”
- 2) To understand all that “the redemption of the body” implies, we need an authentic theology of the body. The constitutive elements are found in what Christ says about “the beginning” and the indissolubility of marriage, about concupiscence and the “human heart,” and in what he says about the resurrection. Christ is speaking to man about man, who is “body” (male and female) created in the image and likeness of God, subject “historically” to concupiscence and called to redemption.
- 3) We await the redemption of the body, which is the eschatological victory over (bodily) death. In light of Christ’s resurrection, Christ’s words about the reality of the “other world” have acquired full eloquence. Christ and Paul proclaimed continence precisely in the name of this eschatological reality. But this bodily redemption is not just an eschatological victory over death, but a moral victory over sin, the overcoming of concupiscence. In daily life, man must draw from this mysterious bodily redemption in overcoming the three-fold concupiscence, in marriage and in continence for the Kingdom. This participation in redemption in this world in the human heart and in human actions fills us with the great eschatological hope of the fullness of redemption.
- 4) Christ’s words help us to discover and strengthen the bond between the dignity of the human being and the nuptial meaning of the body and thereby put into practice the mature freedom of the gift in indissoluble marriage or continence for the Kingdom. In each, Christ reveals man to himself and makes him aware of his “sublime vocation,” inscribed in him through the mystery of the redemption of the body.

## IV. The Dimension of Covenant and Grace in Marriage

### A. Introduction to the Letter to the Ephesians

- 1) We begin an extended reflection on Eph 5:22-33, which is a “crowning” of Christ’s words on the “beginning,” the human “heart” and the future resurrection. We must presuppose the theological truths concerning the redemption of the body in those texts for our interpretation of Ephesians. Ephesians speaks about the body, referring metaphorically to the body of Christ which is the Church and concretely to the human body, male and female, destined for unity in marriage. The meanings converge. The passage is crucial both for the mystery of the Church as well as the sacramental character of marriage. We must ask

how the truth about the sacramentality of marriage emerges in the text and therefore follow the text to Genesis, to the OT prophets and to the analogy of spousal love between God and his chosen people.

- 2) In the theology of the body, we see that the body is a sacrament, a “visible sign of an invisible reality,” that is spiritual, transcendent and divine. A sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, bringing about the grace it signifies. Ephesians helps to reveal woman to man (and vice versa) and makes him aware of his lofty vocation (cf. GS 22).
- 3) Ephesians begins praising God, stating God has called us to be “holy and blameless” “sons through Jesus Christ” “in whom we have redemption through his blood, forgiveness” to the “praise of his glorious grace” and “plan... to unite all things in him.” The author beseeches God that men may fully know Christ as the “head over all things for the Church, which is his body.” Pagans and Hebrews should join together in that temple (2:11-21), bending “the knee before the Father” and being “strengthened” through the Spirit “in the inner man.” After this revelation of Christ in the Church, the second part of the letter focuses on the vocation of Christian life flowing from the divine plan and mystery of Christ in the Church. The author exhorts to “unity” constructed on the diversity of Christ’s gifts, each of which must be used “after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness,” as well as to overcome vice and acquire the appropriate virtues. He calls them to “be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us... in sacrifice” (5:1-2). In chapter 5, he more specifically condemns pagan abuses, and calls them from darkness into the light of the Lord, to walk in the light, filled with the spirit, making melody to the Lord with all your heart. He then turns to the family in this context of praising and thanking God and walking in the light, which is what we will focus upon. In Chapter 6, the passage focuses on relations between parents and children. Children should obey in the Lord and honor their parents. Parents are called not to anger their children but raise them with the Lord’s discipline and instruction. Next he turns to the relationship between slaves and masters. The letter ends by encouraging everyone to spiritual battle, some brief recommendations and a farewell.
- 4) The essential content of the letter has two principle guidelines: the mystery of Christ expresses the divine plan for man’s salvation of man, realized in the Church; the Christian vocation as the model of life of the baptized corresponds to the mystery of Christ and God’s plan for man’s salvation. The call to spiritual battle seems to be the logical thread of the whole letter, the fulfillment of its principle guidelines.

#### B. Reverence for Christ is the basis of the relationship between spouses

- 1) Husbands and wives are called to be “subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” (5:21). The mutual relations of husband and wife should flow from their common relationship with Christ. “Reverence” is a true respect for holiness, the OT “reverential fear,” “piety” or “awe” of God. The author deduces moral instructions for spouses from the mystery of Christ. Reverence for Christ should lead to mutual subjection, which he specifies: “Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord.” This does not mean the husband is “lord” over the wife, but that the wife should find in her relationship with Christ (the Lord of both) the motivation of the relationship with her husband. Husband and wife should be mutually subordinated to each other, flowing from Christian piety and expressed in love. Husbands are called to “love your wives, just as Christ loved the church.”
- 2) Love excludes every type of subjection in which the wife would be a slave or servant of the husband. Their community in marriage should be constituted by reciprocal donation of self, which has Christ as its source. Following and reverencing Christ, the spouses experience a new “fusion” of bilateral relations and conduct, in which there is constituted the true “communion” of the person.

#### C. The three analogies

- 1) Ephesians uses a “great analogy,” **Christ:Church :: husband:wife :: head:body**. This analogy permeates the entire Letter. The mutual relationship between the spouses is to be understood as an image of the relationship between Christ and the Church. There are three components to the analogy:
  - a) Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church...
  - b) As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject to their husbands...
  - c) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her...

- 2) The salvific mystery of Christ's love is imaged in and can be most adequately expressed by analogy to conjugal love. This analogy complements that of the "Mystical Body" (Eph 1:22-23) in expressing the Christ-Church relationship as well as God's eternal love for man. The analogy is mutually (bidirectionally) illuminating. We will focus first on what is revealed about marriage and then see how this marriage is meant to become a visible sign of the divine eternal mystery of the Church united to Christ. Ephesians leads us to the very foundations of the sacramentality of marriage.
- 3) Marriage corresponds to the Christian vocation only when it reflects Christ's love for his Bride that the Bride attempts to reciprocate. In other words, it has to be redeeming love, a reflection of God's love. This analogy is grounded in truth, that to some degree Christian marriage participates in the marriage between Christ and the Church. The analogy shows that marriage, in its deepest essence, emerges from the mystery of God's eternal love for man, fulfilled in Christ's spousal love for the Church. There is obligation involved for women, "to be subject to their husbands as the Church is subject to Christ" and for men to "love your wives, as Christ loved the Church."
- 4) Christ is head as "Savior of his body," the Church. "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her" (Eph 5:25). Through a total self-giving of himself in love Christ formed the Church as his body and continually builds her up, becoming her head. As head and savior of the Church, he is Bridegroom of his Bride; the Church receives from Christ her head the entire gift of salvation of Christ's love and self-gift until the end. In giving himself up for her, Christ is united once and for all with her as bridegroom to bride. The analogy of body-head becomes the analogy of groom-bride. The mystery of the redemption of the body conceals within itself the mystery of the "marriage of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7).
- 5) The supplementary Pauline analogy of head to the body confers the chiefly ecclesiological significance of this statement. The union of the body with the head is organic, which leads to a biological union, inasmuch as the body lives by the head (and vice versa). In the case of man, the organic union also allows for psychic union. Ephesians applies the analogy not just to Christ and the Church but to husband and wife, as if the married couple form one organic union in "one flesh." Two distinct subjects become in a certain sense, in reciprocal relationship, a single subject. Even though Christ and the Church are distinct subjects, the Church is so essentially herself in virtue of union with Christ, that there is an organic union. The Church appears clearly as the second subject of the spousal union to which the first subject, Christ, manifests his love in self-giving. Can we say these same things about husband and wife in marriage as that union through which the "two become one flesh"? This analogy doesn't and cannot blur the individuality of the husband and wife, but points to a union in love following Christ's example.
- 6) Ephesians 5:25-27 tells us that Christ loved the Church, gave himself up for her, to sanctify her by water and the word, to present her to himself in splendor, holy and unblemished. Christ's love has sanctification as its purpose. The principle of sanctification is baptism, which comes from Christ's self-giving redemptive love through which that same love acquires a spousal character. Every baptized person becomes a participant in Christ's spousal love for the Church and his redemption. Baptism prepares Christ's bride. There might even be a reference to pre-matrimonial ablution among the Greeks. There is also an eschatological perspective involved, in Christ's purifying the Bride to present her without spot or wrinkle. Christ wants her to be beautiful with the grace of salvation in its fullness, which begins at baptism, but will be fulfilled only with the definitive fruit of redemptive and spousal love at Christ's final coming.
- 7) Christ's bride, the Church, is presented metaphorically as all beautiful in her body, "without spot or wrinkle," without ugliness or senility, both of which indicate moral defects or sins. This shows how important the body is in the analogy of spousal love. The "old man" signifies sinful man (cf. Rom 6:6). Christ's redemptive and spousal love ensures that the Church not only become sinless, but remain eternally young, splendid "holy and without blemish." Paul explains this whole essentially spiritual and supernatural reality by resemblance to the body and the love whereby husband and wife become one flesh.
- 8) This love of Christ for the Church is the model for spousal love, a solicitation for the other's welfare and holiness through self-giving, creative, disinterested love. "Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies" (v. 28). This shows that the uni-subjectivity in one flesh is intentional, not real: the wife's body is not the husband's body, but must be loved like his own body. It's a question not of ontological unity but of unity through love. "He who loves his wife loves himself" (v. 28). Love makes the "I" of the other his own. The body is the expression of that "I" and the foundation of its identity. This is reciprocal, but

- Ephesians focuses on the man's love, such that the woman's submission might mean above all the "experiencing of love" within the analogy to the Church. The wife, as the object of the husband's spousal love, becomes "one flesh" with him, his "own" flesh. "Let each one of you love his wife as himself" (v. 33). This moral unity in love unites two subjects, allowing them to spiritually belong to each other to such a degree that "he who loves his wife loves himself." The "I" morally becomes the "you" and vice versa. "No man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does for the Church" (v. 29); one cares for the other in love, as Christ has loved us. It also applies to children.
- 9) "Nourishment" and "care" bring scholars to think about the Eucharist, by which Christ in spousal love nourishes the Church in becoming "one flesh" with her.
  - 10) The great analogy of Ephesians leaves readers a profound sense of the "sacredness" of the human body, which, in analogy to the Church made holy by Christ, is called to be holy.

#### D. The great mystery of Christ's spousal love

- 1) Ephesians cites Gen 2:24 about leaving father and mother to be joined to his wife in one flesh in order to present the mystery of Christ with the Church from which the unity of spouses is derived. This is the most important part and foundation of the whole text: "This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (v. 32). The mystery was hidden in God's mind but then revealed to man. It is "great," because it is the central theme of the whole of revelation and its accomplishment. The continuity of God's salvific initiative, in creation with marriage, and in salvation with Christ's self-giving love for the Church, constitutes the essential foundation for this great analogy. This great mystery contained in creation is now being fully manifested (cf. Gal 4:41). This great mystery is the basis for the sacramentality of the whole of Christian life and of Christian marriage.
- 2) "Sacrament" is synonymous with "mystery," hidden even after its revelation, but accepted in faith by man. The sacrament manifests the mystery in an efficacious sign which proclaims and accomplishes in man the call in Christ to holiness and to adoption. This adoption is mysterious, under a visible sign, but real. The Church in Christ is in the nature of a sacrament of communion with God and unity among men (LG 1). The Church is not a sacrament, but in the nature of one, which means we're speaking analogically to the seven sacraments. The sacramentality of the Church is constituted by all the sacraments by which she fulfills her mission of sanctification; the sacramentality of the Church is the source of the sacraments, especially baptism and Eucharist (Eph 5:25-30) and remains in a particular relationship with the most ancient sacrament, marriage.
- 3) Ephesians traces the history of this mystery, from being "hidden in God" "for ages" (3:9), to its being "made known to us in all wisdom and insight" in Christ (1:7-10). Christ reveals and accomplishes this mystery according to the eternal "plan" of God. The letter exhorts those who have received and accepted this revelation in faith to model their lives on it, especially Christian couples. This mystery is at work in men and women, by virtue of Christ's redemption through baptism. Christian morality is linked to this divine mystery and the sacramental order. Christ is the heart of the mystery. In him we have been chosen "before the creation of the world" for adoption as sons, and in him it has been accomplished, i.e., "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (1:7). Men become participants in this mystery. Christ spousally gives the Church himself and the fruits of redemption.
- 4) In the OT, God's love for his people was presented according to the analogy of spousal love, especially in the prophets Isaiah, Hosea and Ezekiel, and in the Song of Solomon. Israel's infidelity and idolatry were considered as "adultery." God's love was compared to that which unites husband and wife in a marriage covenant. Is 54:4-10 says "your Maker is your husband," the "Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, "The Lord has called you like a forsaken wife," "for a brief moment I forsook you, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you." Isaiah leads us in the same direction as Ephesians, which far surpasses it. God's choice of Israel overcomes her "dishonor" of either virginity, widowhood, repudiation or infidelity. God's love for her is clear, everlasting and derives from his initiative alone. God is explicitly called the "spouse of the chosen people." God is not just a "creating" but a "redeeming" spouse.
- 5) While Isaiah and Ephesians share the analogy of spousal love and marriage, there are differences. Ephesians uses first a paternal and not "conjugal" dimension of love, focusing on "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ's" embracing mankind in the "hidden mystery" of his Son and election to holiness. The connection between husband and redeemer in Isaiah is fully developed in Ephesians as the Father's



“beloved Son” in whom we have redemption... the forgiveness of our trespasses.” Ephesians includes Trinitarian, christological and eschatological developments over Isaiah. Paul will not repeat “your maker is your husband” but show how the “Redeemer,” the “beloved of the Father” reveals his salvific love as spousal, giving himself to the Church and making her his own Body. Isaiah outlines the mystery embryonically, which is fully revealed without ceasing to be a mystery. But Isaiah helps us to understand better Ephesians and the analogy of the spousal love of Christ and the Church.

- 6) The analogy of spousal love between Christ and the Church allows us to penetrate the mystery revealed in the OT and NT. No analogy cannot provide a complete understanding of the divine mystery hidden for ages and revealed in Christ’s love for the Church. But this analogy gives a certain “cognitive penetration” into the mystery’s essence. Christ’s total and irrevocable gift of self on the part of God fulfilled the mystery. It is both personal (espousing us individually) and communal (espousing us as a people). The people as a whole become the espoused bride. Every concrete “I” should find himself in the biblical “we.” The spousal analogy in Eph 5 and Isaiah goes beyond the paternal analogy of Eph 1 and the “compassionate” analogy of Isaiah by emphasizing God’s radical (though not metaphysically total because of man’s incapacity to receive God totally) and irrevocable gift of self to man. All that God could give to him, he did.
- 7) The mystery also determines the way to understand the mystery, and hence, by analogy, the manner of understanding marriage itself. This is the second function of the great analogy, to help us understand the sacramentality of marriage. The invisible mystery hidden for ages in God became visible in the historical event of Christ. The great mystery of the relationship of Christ to the Church became the concretization of the mystery. The visible sign of marriage in the beginning is tied to the visible sign of Christ and the Church. God’s eternal plan of love became the foundation of the whole sacramental order. Ephesians brought these two signs together and made of them one great sign, the great mystery or sacrament.

#### E. Rereading the “beginning” on the basis of Ephesians

- 1) From the first cycle on Genesis, we saw man as the highest expression of the divine gift, which he bore within; in his likeness to God, he transcends the sign to its meaning, the conjugal significance of the body in the mystery of original innocence. Marriage was shown to be the primordial sacrament, a sign which effectively transmits visibly the invisible mystery hidden from eternity in God, the mystery of Truth, love and divine life. Re-reading these truths on the basis of Ephesians, we can approach “the beginning” from the perspective of the mystery hidden in God. “God chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him” (Eph 1:3-4). God’s plans for man precede creation. Man was “chosen” from the beginning to be “holy and blameless” and to “adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.” God saw man as “very good.” Before sin, man bore the fruit of eternal election in Christ and was holy and blameless before God. This primordial holiness and purity was expressed in unashamed nakedness. This supernatural bounty was granted in consideration of the Son, whose incarnation and redemption would come later. Man’s supernatural endowment in the beginning — original justice and original innocence — came through election in Christ.
- 2) The body, in its visible masculinity and femininity, is the sacrament of the person, of his spiritual and divine endowment. It was the visible sign of the mystery hidden from eternity in God. Original innocence allowed man to discover in his body the holiness of the person. The nuptial meaning of the body through one-flesh union in marriage and communion of persons, is a central part of the primordial “sacrament of creation,” from which marriage is derived. Marriage through its procreative power continues the work of creation and expresses the salvific initiative of the Creator in the eternal election of man. The original sacrament of creation draws its efficacy from the “beloved Son” (Eph 1:6). Therefore, marriage, inserted in this global sacrament of creation, not only prolongs the work of creation in procreation, but also extends to further generations the same sacrament of creation, the supernatural fruits of man’s eternal election by the Father in the Son.
- 3) Original sin deprived marriage, as a primordial sacrament, of the supernatural efficacy that formerly belonged to it. But marriage never ceased being the figure of that sacrament we see in Eph 5. Marriage remained, however, the platform for the actuation of God’s eternal designs, preparing them for redemption. The “great mystery” referring to “Christ and the Church” indicates the continuity between the primordial sacrament of man’s originally being in supernatural grace and the new grace of the

sacrament of redemption. Christ's gift "for" the Church is also "to" the Church in nuptial love. The sacrament of redemption takes on the form of the sacrament of creation. The analogy of the marriage of Christ with the Church is the "great" sign of the supernatural gracing of man in the sacrament of redemption, according to the plan of God's eternal election, broken in the "beginning" by sin. This sacrament of redemption is the definitive fulfillment of the mystery hidden from eternity in God. Not only did God choose us in Christ before the world began, but says in Christ we have redemption through his blood. This new gracing of man in the sacrament of redemption is a new actuation of mystery hidden in God in creation. It is a "new creation." Original gracing gave man original innocence in justice; new gracing gives him "remission of sins," where grace can abound "even more" (Rom 5:20).

- 4) The sacrament of redemption is a permanent dimension of the life of the Church. It is the great mystery of Christ and the Church, continually actuated in her, because of Christ's indissoluble love for and unity with his bride. In living the sacrament of redemption as a wife with spousal love, she completes her husband as a "helper fit for him." She draws from Christ's sacrament of redemption all her fruitfulness and spiritual motherhood. The mystery hidden from all eternity in God, which became a visible reality "in the beginning" in the sacrament of creation through the union of Adam and Eve in marriage, became in the sacrament of redemption a visible reality in the nuptial and indissoluble union of Christ with his Church. The "visibility" of the mystery does not eliminate the mystery, which remains veiled in faith. Rather, it is visible as a "sign." The creation of the First Adam and Eve in original innocence and called to conjugal union in the sacrament of creation was a sign of the eternal mystery of the Second Adam united in an indissoluble bond and quasi-conjugal covenant in the sacrament of redemption with his Bride.
- 5) The sacramentality of marriage is not merely a model and figure of the sacrament of Christ and the Church, but constitutes an essential part of the sacrament of Redemption with which the Church is endowed in Christ. Re-reading Jesus' response to the Pharisees about marriage in light of Ephesians, we see the relationship of marriage with the whole sacramental order in the New Covenant. Marriage, as a primordial sacrament, is assumed and inserted into the integral structure and prototype of the new sacramental economy. All sacraments find their prototype in marriage as the primordial sacrament. But marriage is more than a model for them. Against the Pharisees, Christ declares marriage an integral part of the new order of salvific "signs" deriving from sacrament of redemption (the mystery of Christ and the Church), just as the original economy emerged from the sacrament of creation. Christ had limited himself to the one sacrament of marriage in creation. The new economy differs from the original; it is not directed to the man of justice and original innocence, but to the historical man of threefold concupiscence and the "desires of the flesh." Marriage as a "great" Sacrament of the New Covenant is tied to the ethos of redemption, to a particular morality that should characterize the life of Christians, chosen and redeemed in Christ and the church.
- 6) So far we have used "sacrament" in a sense wider than traditional and contemporary terminology, which uses it strictly to refer to the seven efficacious signs of grace instituted by Christ and administered by the Church. These seven sacraments are comprised of words (the form) and specific sacramental matter. We have here used sacrament to signify the revelation and actuation of the very mystery of God hidden from eternity. In this sense we spoke of the sacrament of creation and the Sacrament of Redemption. We understand the original sacramentality of marriage (the primordial sacrament) on the basis of the sacrament of creation; we understand the sacramentality of the Church (of the union of Christ with the Church) on the basis of the Sacrament of Redemption in analogy with the conjugal union of husband and wife. This renews the salvific content of the primordial sacrament. This is crucial to understand the sacramentality of the Church as well as the sacrament of marriage.

#### F. Rereading Ephesians on the basis of marriage and other NT texts

- 1) In analyzing Ephesians 5 on the basis of the sacramentality of marriage, we can say that it speaks directly of baptism "having cleansed her by the washing of water with the words" as well as the Eucharist in Christ's "nourishing and cherishing" his own Body. But it speaks of the "sacrament of marriage" indirectly. Ephesians proclaims that the primordial sacrament of marriage is realized in a new way in the "sacrament" of Christ and the Church and urges spouses to model their behavior on Christ's and the Church's spousal behavior (the sacrament of redemption), which goes back to the "beginning." Christ's words, spoken within the mystery of the redemption of the body, open for historical man both marriage

- and continence for the Kingdom up to the eschatological dimension of hope in daily life. Redemption's "new creation" assumes and transforms historical man and the world.
- 2) In examining Ephesians 5 on the basis of Christ's words in the Gospel, we can say that Christ speaks of marriage in Mt 19 as a "sacrament" in which the one-flesh union of man and woman is a sign of their destiny to be united "in truth and love" as adopted children of God in Christ, as a communion of persons in the likeness of the Trinity. Christ confirms the primordial sacrament in the mystery of Redemption. Insisting on indissolubility, Christ opens marriage to God's salvific action, flowing from the "redemption of the body," and to unity of love. The "ethos of redemption" allows us to understand the personal dignity of the human body, which dignity lies at the root of the conjugal covenant's indissolubility. Christ's moral conclusions from indissolubility about divorce and remarriage constituting adultery show that this sacrament constitutes an exhortation to man to participate consciously in bodily redemption. This ethical dimension is developed in the Sermon on the Mount about lust and adultery in the heart. These words are part of the "sacramental substratum" in which man and woman are inserted as creatures with the dignity of the image and likeness of God. Christ gives as a duty to men and women to protect each other's dignity and their own dignity, to protect the "sacrum" of the person seen in the "body." Christ's words achieve full significance in the sacrament of marriage, in which, on the basis of the redemption, man and woman can find again the dignity and holiness of conjugal union. To the concupiscent man, God gave in marriage the sacrament of redemption. Marriage is a sacrament from the "beginning" but, on the basis of man's "historic" sinfulness, it is a sacrament arising from the mystery of the "redemption of the body." Marriage-as a sacrament born of the mystery of the redemption and reborn, in a certain sense, in the spousal love of Christ and of the Church-is an efficacious expression of the saving power of God who accomplishes his eternal plan even after sin and in spite of the threefold concupiscence hidden in the heart of every man, male and female. As a sacrament of God's saving power, marriage exhorts man to dominate concupiscence, which will produce the fruit of unity and indissolubility.
  - 3) Examining Ephesians 5 on the basis of St. Paul's writings in 1 Corinthians and the Romans, we note that Paul says that marriage is a special "gift" or grace (1 Cor 7:7). He is also realistic about being "afire with passion," "conjugal rights," and the "temptation to immorality." Marriage, "a gift," is not just a remedy for concupiscence, but it has an ethos, which penetrates eros in the heart of man and orders his passions. As a sacrament of the Church, man and woman are called to model their life together drawing from the "redemption of the body," in chastity fitting for their state "according to the Spirit." The consequent domination of egoistic gratification makes the "flesh" in this sacramental covenant the "substratum" of the indissoluble communion of persons. By life "according to the Spirit," man and woman can find again the true freedom of the gift, united to the nuptial meaning of the body, and submitted to the blessing of procreation; by the same Spirit, they can discover their dignity as parents and the sanctity of life in which they participate in the mystery of creation. This new human life, conceived and born in conjugal love, can now enter the "freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:21). This is the hope of the mother in labor (8:22). Marriage is "in the world" but not "of the world" (understanding world in the sense opposed to the Spirit in 1Jn2:16). Marriage as a sacrament therefore constitutes the basis of hope for man and woman, children and future generations. Marriage brings man to his beginning as well as in hope to the eschaton.
  - 4) Examining Ephesians 5 on the basis of Christ's words on the resurrection, we know that marriage does not pertain to the eschatological reality of heaven. But resurrected man is still the same man, male and female, whose origin in this world is linked with marriage as the primordial sacrament. Christ's words, therefore, directly reveal the significance of marriage for the participation of men, sons and daughters, in the future resurrection. Without marriage and procreation, there would be no eschaton for children who didn't exist. Marriage, the primordial sacrament reborn in the spousal love of Christ and the Church, does not pertain eschatologically to the redemption of the body, but does in this world give a hope and an ethos of the redemption as well as a participation in that redemption, by doing the will of the Father (1Jn2:17) and dominating concupiscence.
  - 5) Ephesian's "great analogy" presupposes marriage as a sacrament at the beginning united to the mystery of creation and helps us to rediscover it as reborn and renewed in the fruit of the spousal love of Christ and the Church in the mystery of redemption. Human spouses are exhorted directly to model their spousal life and love on Christ and the Church. Created in the image of God, the spouses' love is called to a particular

communion of persons that is (pro)creative. This original meaning is renewed and deepened when spouses unite “out of reverence for Christ” in the “redemption of the body.” Ephesians links the redemptive and spousal dimensions of love, fusing them into one. In the sacrament of marriage, Christ’s redemptive and spousal love permeates the couple’s life. The spousal significance of the body in masculinity and femininity is “newly created” by its insertion in Christ’s redemptive, self-giving love. The spouses must connect the spousal and “redemptive” significance of the body to understand the body’s full meaning. In celibacy for the Kingdom, the spousal and redemptive dimensions of love are reciprocally united in a way different from marriage. They make Christ’s spousal, redemptive love for the Church their own and give witness to the hope united to the redemption of the body. The “great sacrament” of Christ’s and the Church’s spousal and redemptive love is a new sacrament of man in Christ and in the Church. Marriage is organically inscribed in this sacrament of redemption, just as it was in the original sacrament of creation.

- 6) Man should seek the meaning of his existence and the meaning of his humanity by reaching out to the mystery of creation through the reality of redemption. There we find the meaning of the human body and the person’s masculinity and femininity. The spousal meaning of the body is fulfilled in its redemptive significance, not only in marriage and in continence for the kingdom, but also in suffering and in birth and in death. Marriage as a sacrament remains a living and vivifying part of this saving process.

## V. The Dimension of Sign

### A. The language of the body

- 1) Man and woman enter into the sacrament of marriage by expressing their mutual consent to take the other in fidelity, come what may. They administer the sacrament to each other, which the priest witnesses. The sacramental words by which the couple expresses their mutual consent is merely the sign of the coming into being of marriage. Without consummation, the marriage is not yet constituted in its full reality. The sacramental words can only be fulfilled by means of conjugal intercourse, determined from the beginning by the Creator, in leaving father and mother, cleaving to each other and becoming one flesh (cf. Gen 2:24). We will focus on the reality corresponding to these consensual words of willingness to become “one flesh.” Both the words and the reality are important with regard to the structure of the sacramental sign, which effects the saving grace it signifies. We focused above on the grace; now we focus on the sign.
- 2) The sacrament of marriage is contracted by the words of the newlyweds that, intentionally, they have decided to be from now on the one *for* the other and *with* the other. The words form an integral part of the sacramental sign for what they signify and determine; the sign is constituted in the intentional order insofar as it is simultaneously constituted in the real order. For the sacramental sign to be constituted, the reality must correspond to the words. Man and woman, as ministers in the moment of contracting marriage, constitute the full and real visible sign; their words would not constitute the sign unless they corresponded to the person and the awareness of the body (masculine and feminine), essentially the same as “in the beginning.” It is determined by the “language of the body,” in which man and woman express the reciprocal gift of masculinity and femininity in one flesh as the basis of the conjugal union of persons. The sacramental sign is constituted by the fact that the newlyweds use the same “language of the body” as the beginning. They give it an intentional expression at the level of intellect and will in the words of the liturgy. “I take you as my wife/husband” imply the unique and irrepeatable “language of the body” situated in the communion of persons, which we hear in the promise to be faithful in sickness, sadness, and to honor and love all the days of one’s life. The language of the body is not just the substratum but the constitute element of the personal communion. Man and woman become for each other a mutual gift in their masculinity and femininity, discovering and reciprocally expressing the significance of the body irreversibly for life. The sign is comprised both by the words of administration and the recollection of this “language of the body” until death. This is a visible and efficacious sign of the covenant with God in Christ.
- 3) The key for understanding the sacrament of marriage is the reality of the sign within the covenant of man with God in Christ and in the Church. Marriage is a visible and efficacious sign of the grace of the mystery of redemption in the service of the “union of the sons of God in truth and love” (GS 24). The marriage rite gives a form to that sign directly on the basis of words; indirectly, throughout life, man and woman bear and remain this sign.

- 4) The prophets of the OT (especially Hosea, Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah), we discover the great analogy whose final expression we find in the marriage between Christ and the Church (Eph 5). There is a “prophetism of the body,” an analogy that signifies precisely the “language of the body.” The analogy has two levels:
- a) The prophets present the covenant between God and Israel as a marriage; the covenant was initiated by God by a special choice, which implies for the prophets love and grace; Israel is presented personally as a “spouse” or “wife.” God’s absolute dominion becomes understood as his love. Israel’s infidelity is a betrayal tantamount to adultery, which pierces the heart of the Spouse. The first level is the spousal character of this covenant of God with Israel, which reveals the second.
  - b) The language of the body. The prophets presupposed the “objective” dimension of language, in which man and woman, by free choice, become “one flesh.” But there is also a subjective sense in which they allow the body to speak for itself. In the prophetic texts of the Covenant, in spousal analogy, the body speaks by means of its masculinity or femininity the mysterious language of personal gift, the language of fidelity and love, as well as the language of conjugal infidelity or adultery. Hosea condemned Israel’s infidelity not just with words, but in the language of the action of marrying a prostitute, in which the husband shows is both merciful and demanding. Ezekiel used the symbol of Jerusalem’s adultery (Ezek 16 and 23), saying she “played the harlot” with any passerby. In these passages, the body speaks a “language” of which it is not the author. Its author is the person with the everlasting vocation to the communion of persons. Man cannot express this language of personal existence and vocation without the body. Since his creation, man’s most profound words — of love, giving, fidelity — demand an adequate “language of the body,” without which they cannot be fully expressed. This refers both to marriage and to celibacy for the Kingdom. By means of this “language of the body,” the prophets express the spousal depth of the Covenant and all that is opposed to it, of good and evil, fidelity and adultery.
- 5) The prophet’s “language of the body,” like any language, is not just moral, but the expression of categories of truth and falsity. The body speaks the truth through fidelity and conjugal love, and lies when it commits “adultery.” This is not substituting ethical with logical categories. Truth is a correspondence between what is said and reality. Fidelity and chastity correspond to the spousal significance of the human body in its masculinity and femininity; adultery contradicts and opposes this meaning. The essential element for marriage as a sacrament is the “language of the body” in its aspects of truth, which constitutes the sacramental sign. The language of the body enters into the integral structure of the sacramental sign whose principal subject is man, male and female. The words of consent constitute this sign, because in them we find the spousal significance of the body expressed by the words “I take you as my wife/husband.” In these words is confirmed the essential “truth” of the language of the body in conjugal love, fidelity and integrity. In pronouncing the words, the newlyweds set themselves in the line of the “prophetism of the body.” The language of the body expressed by the ministers of the Sacrament constitutes the visible sign of the Covenant and the grace it imparts, going back to creation and sustained by the redemption of the body.
- 6) The person reads the meaning of the language of the body in its spousal significance. A correct reading of this truth is indispensable to proclaim this truth in the visible sign of the sacrament of marriage. The spouses proclaim this re-read truth as the content and principle of their new life in Christ and the Church. The ministers perform an act of “prophetism of the body,” confirming their participation in the Church’s prophetic mission received from Christ, expressing in human words in God’s name the truth coming from God. Their “prophetic” proclamation of matrimonial consent both announces and causes the fact that from now on, before God, the Church and society, they are husband and wife. The woman and man address each other in the second person singular, “you” and “I,” and the language of the body through the words constitutes the communion of persons. The prophetic character proclaims the statement of the truth of this communion in God’s name. God created man and woman capable of expressing this language, in creation and then redemption. They express it the language of the body in the sacrament, in which not only do they embrace the personal reality of the communion of persons, but the very sources of its prophetic eloquence and sacramental power. Before being expressed by spouses, this language of the body was expressed by God in Genesis, through the OT prophets and in Ephesians.
- 7) Man is the author of the language of the body; and he re-reads “in truth” this language in discovering the spousal significance of the body. This gives his words of consent prophet character, “I take you...” Both

- spouses decide freely to act in conformity with the language, reread in truth, in the mutual conjugal relationship. The sign of marriage is not a mere immediate and passing one, but one that looks to the future and produces a lasting effect, the marriage bond, which is indissoluble (all the days of my life). The spouses need to ensure that the sign originating in the language of the body is continually “re-read” in truth, remaining organically linked to conjugal morality. In the truth of the sign, there is the procreative significance of the body, paternity and maternity. The man and woman commit to “accept children lovingly and responsibly and bring them up according to the law of Christ and the Church.”
- 8) To say that the sign of the sacrament of marriage is constituted by the “language of the body” is to use an analogy of attribution. A body as such does not speak, but man speaks re-reading the significance of the body and what can be expressed by man only through the body. Man does not speak with the language of the body, but permits the body to speak “for him” “on his behalf,” with his personal authority. This is akin to the “prophetism of the body,” because the prophets speak in the name and with the authority of a person.
  - 9) The original visible sign of the newlyweds in contracting marriage needs to be continually completed by the “prophetism of the body” throughout their conjugal life. Their bodies will speak “for” and “on behalf” of each of them, in the authority of their persons, carrying out the conjugal dialogue proper to their vocation in the language of the body, continually re-read in truth. They’re called to form their life together as a communion of persons on the basis of that language. By means of their conduct and comportment, actions and gestures, the spouses are called to become the authors of such meanings of the language of the body, in which their love, fidelity, conjugal morality and indissoluble union are nourished. The meanings of the language of the body are synthetically “programmed” into conjugal consent so that the spouses may later, day-by-day, identify themselves with it. There is an organic link between rereading in truth the integral significance of the language of the body and the later use of that language in conjugal life. The spouse’s body language is called to speak “prophetically” the truth which has been reread and live according to this truth. Otherwise, he is guilty of a lie and falsifies the language of the body. There are “true” and “false” prophets. Spouses are called to be “true” in bearing witness in their body language to spousal and procreative love. We base all of this on what we have analyzed before concerning the key words of Christ and the individual dimensions of the theology of the body.
  - 10) The person who rereads the language of the body and then expresses is historically the man of concupiscence, who can re-read and express not according to the requirements of marriage as a covenant and sacrament. He can do it “adulterously.” The man of concupiscence has been called to the ethos of redemption. The three-fold concupiscence doesn’t destroy the capacity to reread continually in truth the language of the body, but it causes many errors in rereading the language. These errors give rise to sin. In the ethos of redemption, it is possible to pass from error to truth, from sin to chastity, in life according to the Spirit. Historical man can reread it in truth and express and continually renew fidelity no matter what all the days of life. He is capable of forming in truth that language in conjugal and familial communion. The sacramental sign contains a specific theological anthropology, a hermeneutics of man and a hermeneutics of the sacrament. Man, the author (co-author) of the sacramental sign of divine creation and redemption, is a conscious subject of self-determination. Man is capable of discerning truth from falsity in the language of the body. He is the author of the meanings of that language, whether true or false. If man were determined by his libido, he would be condemned to essential falsifications in body language, incapable of expressing spousal love and the communion of persons. This would lead to suspicion of himself and others in the truth of body language. He could be accused, not called. But the hermeneutics of the sacrament allow us to say man is always essentially called and not just accused.

## B. The Song of Songs

- 1) The considerations on *Humanae Vitae*, premised on the Song of Songs (SSongs) and the Book of Tobit, will constitute in the Pope’s opinion the “crowning” of everything he has said. This will help us understand more adequately the sacramental sign of marriage, manifested in the language of the body, a singular language of love originating in the heart. The SSongs allows us to know who the female “you” is for the male “I” and vice versa, which is crucial for the theology of the body and of the sacramental sign of marriage.

- 2) The theme of marital love connects the SSongs to the “great analogy” through the OT prophets into the NT and Ephesians. It is not possible to separate the SSongs from the reality of the original sacrament, to reread it except in light of Genesis. There is found in it the “rich” language of the body, the visible sign of man’s and woman’s participation in God’s covenant of grace of love offered to man.
- 3) The SSongs are a “poem” in which groom and bride move in a circle of love, in which their gestures correspond to the interior movements of their hearts. Through this prism of loving movement, we understand the body language that points to the joy of the first man in finding a “helper like himself.” This original joy is developed in the duet of the SSongs. Body language expresses itself in mutual fascination of the bride’s femininity and the groom’s masculinity. Their loving words concentrate on the “body,” as the visible sign of their attraction toward the other person. Love for the person in the body unleashes a special experience of the beauty of the person, which gives rise to mutual satisfaction. “You are all beautiful, my beloved” (Sg 4:7). The “I” of the woman speaks to the man in every feminine trait — almost without words — leading to enchantment. The body language finds a rich echo in the groom’s words about his satisfying experience of beauty.
- 4) The term “beloved” indicates what is essential for love, putting a second “I” beside one’s own in friendship. “Sister” is even more eloquent, speaking not just a union in mankind but also a difference in sex and the very way of being a person and being in relationship. This term constitutes a challenge for the man and helps him identify himself. Man accepts the challenge and seeks the common past of their “common [familial] home.” They owe their existence to the same mother. Their fraternity allows them to live their mutual closeness in security. “Sister” expresses the history of the femininity of the person love, from time of girlhood, and embrace her — body and soul — in disinterested tenderness, leading to a “peace of the body” (8:10) through a reciprocal and disinterested gift according to the image of God. This is the first “plot” of the poem, which is “fraternal.”
- 5) The second “plot” of the poem refers to the “sister’s” or “bride’s” being “an enclosed garden, a fountain sealed” (4:12). It reveals the female “I” as master of her own mystery. The signal her personal dignity and self-possession, capable of giving herself in union with another. The language of the body reread in truth points to this interior inviolability of the person. But it is in accord with the gift of self: “My lover belongs to me and I to him” (2:16, 6:3). They freely entrust their own personal mystery to the other, as masters of their own choice. The freedom of the gift is the response to the deep awareness of the gift of one’s inviolable mystery.
- 6) As spouses grow nearer to each other in love, they share without violation their interior mysteries through affection and sentiment which allows one to discover the other as a gift. The body language of this mutual loving approximation can be reread in truth. In SSongs 7, the man’s words not only praise her feminine beauty, but speak of the self-giving of the person. The bride responds to his longing with the gift of herself in love, which is both spiritual and sensual. They reread the significance of the body in truth toward the sign of their mutual gift of self. The language of the body is part of the process of mutual attraction in affectionate solicitude and mutual rediscovery. In meeting each other, the search continues interiorly with the heart “awake.” This aspiration born of love on the basis of body language is a search for integral beauty and purity. We see eros as the form of love at work in the energies of desire and in the subjective certainty of mutual, faithful and exclusive belonging. But we also see the restlessness of “eros,” which is asymptotic and needs to be self-controlled. The person cannot be fully appropriated and mastered by another. In re-reading this body language, man and woman conclude that the fullness of their belonging is found in the mutual gift in love that never dies (“stern as death”). This truth about interior love and the gift continually calls them to express it their mutual belonging in mutual self-giving. Eros seeks to be integrated through another truth about love. St. Paul will proclaim this truth in 1 Corinthians 13: “Love never fails.” The horizon is eros found in SSongs is open to another horizon of love in Paul, speaking another language, inviting to another communion. This “agape” brings eros to completion by purifying it.

### C. The Book of Tobit

- 1) We will analyze passages of Tobit on the basis of the “language of the body” which constitutes the sacramental sign of marriage. In Tobit, Tobiah calls Sarah “sister” and says that “his heart became set on her” (Tb 6:19), which confirms the truth of SSong’s words about love’s being “stern as death.” Tobiah

had reason to fear the same death as Sarah's first seven husbands before intercourse (through the work of a demon). Tobiah's love from the beginning had to face the real test of life and death. They face it together; "life" wins, because love, supported by prayer, is revealed as more stern than death.

- 2) Tobiah and Sarah find themselves in a situation in which good and evil compete against each other, something that was unperceived in the "abstract" poem SSongs. The truth and power of love are shown in placing oneself between the forces of good and evil; love is ready to do everything so that good may conquer. Tobiah's and Sarah's love is not expressed in poetic words, but by their choices and actions in body language, especially prayer.
- 3) Tobiah's prayer — which is first of praise and thanksgiving, then supplication — situates the language of the body on the objective and essential terms of the theology of the body. Their conjugal pact expresses and realizes the mystery originating in God, in God's original covenant with the human race in eternal Love. They respond to God, asking for his mercy and the grace to live faithfully to a happy old age. They ask to be able to respond to love. Both together form this sign of marriage. Through the one and the other the "language of the body", reread in the subjective dimension of the truth of human hearts and in the "objective" dimension of the truth of living union, becomes the language of the liturgy.

#### D. Rereading Ephesians on the basis of the language of the body

- 1) We find in Ephesians 5 a "mystical" language of the body. Marriage is a "great mystery," fulfilled in the spousal union of Christ and the Church. The text extends the analogy of the union of Christ and the Church to the sacramental sign of the marriage covenant between man and woman. In extending the mystical analogy to the "language of the body," re-read in the truth of spousal love and conjugal union, the language of the body is brought nearer to the dimension of real sanctity. The sacraments inject sanctity into human persons, expressed and effected in the liturgy.
- 2) The liturgy elevates the conjugal pact of man and woman based on body language re-read in truth to the dimension of mystery, enabling the covenant to be fulfilled as a mystery through body language. The liturgical language of this sacramental sign signifies not just the coming-into-being of the marriage, but also its whole duration as a sacred, sacramental reality, rooted in creation and redemption. The liturgical language assigns to both man and woman love, fidelity, indissolubility, unity and conjugal honesty through the "language of the body." It also gives them as a duty all the "sacrum" of the person and the communion of persons in this language. In this sense, liturgical language becomes body language, a series of acts and duties that form the "spirituality" or "ethos" of marriage. In daily life, these acts become duties and duties become acts, commitments of a spiritual nature.
- 3) The language of the body is an uninterrupted continuity of liturgical language, expressed not only as the attraction of SSongs, but also a profound experience of the sacrum, which mysteriously infuses masculinity and femininity, going back to the "beginning." The mutual "reverence for Christ" and "respect" to which the spouses are called is the spiritually mature form of mutual attraction going back to Genesis. This mature form is found in the SSongs and in Tobit. This spiritual maturity of attraction is the gift of piety (fear of the Lord). Paul's teaching on chastity as "life according to the Spirit" (Rm 8:5) allows us to interpret that "respect" as a gift of the HS. Ephesians seems to indicate chastity "out of reverence for Christ" as a virtue and a gift. Through the virtue and gift, the mutual attraction of masculinity and femininity spiritually matures, dissociates from concupiscence, and discovers the freedom of the gift, united to femininity and masculinity in the true spousal significance of the body. This liturgical language — of the sacrament and the mystery — becomes in their common life the "language of the body" in depth, simplicity and beauty.
- 4) Through the continual expression of the sacramental sign of marriage in the language of the body, man and woman encounter the great "mystery" and transfer the light (truth and beauty) of that mystery to the language of the practice of love, fidelity and conjugal honesty. In this way, conjugal life becomes liturgical (an act of worship).

## VII. He Gave them the Law of Life as their Inheritance

### A. Humanae Vitae and the language of the body.



- 1) These reflections would be incomplete without a concrete application in the sphere of marital and family morality. We will re-read *Humanae Vitae* in light of these reflections and illustrate and examine one of its passages. HV 11 says in any use of marriage, there must be no impairment of its natural capacity to procreate; HV 12 adds that there is an inseparable connection established by God between the unitive and procreative meanings inherent to the marriage act. This passage is central and connected to the sacramental sign. This sign is based on the “language of the body” reread in truth, in which spouses commit themselves to be faithful, to love and honor each other all their days, not just at their wedding but throughout their marriage. HV focuses on the moment in which spouses become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24); this is the moment when the “language of the body” must be re-read in truth, which is indispensable for their acting in truth.
- 2) HV 12 founds this inseparable connection in the fundamental structure of the marriage act, in the laws written into man’s and woman’s nature for the generation of new life. We are dealing with a norm of natural law. HV points us to the nature of the act and then the nature of the subjects who are performing the act. The nature of the act establishes the foundation for an adequate reading of the two meanings that must influence the conscience of the acting parties and the relationship between the two meanings. The marriage act simultaneously (1) unites husband and wife in closest intimacy and (2) makes them capable of generating new life. This two-fold meaning and the inseparable connection between them, must be read simultaneously. This is the “language of the body” in truth that gives rise to the moral norm. It is a re-reading of the ontological truth of the conjugal act, which then enters into the subjective and psychological dimension and influences their moral choices.
- 3) HV 12 says that we can see that this teaching is in harmony with reason, concerning all three dimensions. In stressing that this norm belongs to the “natural law,” which the magisterium has the competence to interpret, Paul VI says it is in accord with reason. Even though it doesn’t appear explicitly in Scripture, it is contained in Tradition and is in accordance with sum total of doctrine revealed in the Bible (HV 4); not just its essential premises and general character, but the full context we find in speaking of the “theology of the body.” Hence the moral norms belong not only to the natural moral law, but to the moral order revealed by God, especially in biblical anthropology, which has great importance in ethics. Thus it is reasonable to look to the “theology of the body” to found the truth of the norms that concern two people becoming “one flesh.” As a norm of the natural law, the teaching of HV concerns all men; because of the confirmation the reasonable norm finds in the theology and ethos of the body, it concerns Christians even more. That is why we will re-read it here.
- 4) HV developed and shed light on GS 51’s point that there cannot be a contradiction between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those fostering authentic conjugal love. Both documents are pastoral, in honest response to modern man’s questions. HV focuses keenly on the norm and then on the pastoral arguments to man in the concrete. He calls man to “resolute purpose and great endurance,” relying on God’s help and grace, which will enhance man’s dignity and benefit society (HV 20). There is not only not a contradiction but a clear possibility of observing the divine law. The whole biblical background — called the theology of the body — confirms the truth of the norm and prepares us to consider more deeply the practical and pastoral aspects of the problem. JP II notes that those who say HV didn’t take into account concrete difficulties don’t understand pastoral origin of document, nor the word pastoral, which recognizes that the only true good of the human person consists in discovering and fulfilling God’s plan. HV fulfilled GS 51’s question of harmonizing “human love with respect for life” by recalling the norm and showing the possibility of observing it.

#### B. True meaning of responsible parenthood in GS and HV

- 1) In harmonizing married love with responsible transmission of life, GS 51 says good intentions are not enough. There is the need for criteria drawn from the nature of the person and action that respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in true love through the practice of chastity. Catholics are forbidden to use methods condemned by the magisterium. GS 50 teaches of the need to form correct judgments through docile respect for God, considering their own, their present and future children, the signs of the time, their material and spiritual situation, and the good of the family, society and the Church. The couple must arrive at these judgments before God, not simply following their own fancy but ruled by a conscience conformed to God’s law (which protects and fulfills married love) and the

magisterium, which authentically interprets that law. These are the necessary premises for responsible parenthood, especially the person conscience in relation to the divine law authentically interpreted by the magisterium.

- 2) HV goes further and makes these premises concrete. Paul VI is guided by the “integral” (rather than partial) concept of man and conjugal love. Responsible parenthood involves discovering the biological laws of the human person, the domination of reason and will over innate drives and emotions, and the prudent and generous decision to have a large family or, respecting the moral law, to choose to have no more children for an indefinite now. Responsible parenthood is not merely avoiding another birth, but to increase the family prudently, according to the objective moral order instituted by God and interpreted by right conscience. It involves keeping priorities straight toward God, themselves, their families and human society. It’s not acting “arbitrarily,” but according to God’s creative intention and his divine plan manifested in the “intimate structure of the conjugal act” and the “inseparable connection of the two meanings” of it.

### C. Periodic continence versus contraception

- 1) HV distinguishes between morally licit and illicit regulation of fertility. It mentions as illicit abortion, direct sterilization, and all contraceptive means “any action, which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation” (HV 14). It is morally licit to take advantage of “recourse to infertile periods” if there are “reasonable grounds for spacing births, arising from the physical or psychological conditions of husband or wife or from external circumstances” (HV 16). HV says there is an essential ethical difference between contraception and periodic continence; one rightly uses a facility provided by nature; the other obstructs the natural development of the generative process. Paul VI notes that in each case couples may have acceptable reasons for intending to avoid children, but the means they choose to employ must also be moral. The act has its own intrinsic moral qualification. HV 20 describes the normative moral principles of action and the (pastoral) possibility of acting in accordance with them. The theology of the body — which is not a theory, but a specific, evangelical Christian pedagogy of the body derived from the Bible, especially the Gospels — responds to the question about man’s true good as a person, male and female, and what corresponds to man’s true dignity in married life.
- 2) The essence of the Church’s doctrine here consists in maintaining the adequate relationship between the “domination of nature” (HV 2) and the “mastery of self,” (HV 21) which is indispensable for man. Modern man often transfers the methods proper to dominating nature to dominating the self, but man needs self-mastery, which is “natural” and corresponds to his constitution. “Artificial” contraception destroys the constitutive dimension of the person, depriving him of his subjectivity and making him an object of manipulation.
- 3) The human body is not merely an organism of sexual reactions, but the means of expressing the entire person through the “language of the body,” which should “prophetically” express the truth of the sacrament of marriage and the “eternal plan of love.” HV brings this truth to its logical, moral, practical and pastoral consequences. The unity of the sacramental and personal (or theological and ethical) dimensions is important, for in the integral truth of his personality is the subject of the natural law. Man and woman is called to be a witness and interpreter of the eternal plan of love, as a minister of the sacrament which “from the beginning” was constituted by the sign of the “union of flesh.” The sacrament is constituted by consent and perfected by conjugal union; man and woman are called to express the mysterious language of their bodies in all truth. Through gestures, actions and reactions, the person speaks through the body. Especially in becoming one flesh, man and woman reciprocally express themselves in the measure of the truth of the human person. Insofar as he is master of himself, man can freely “give himself” to the other. This is essential for the body language of conjugal union. This language should be judged according to the criterion of truth that HV recalls. Expressed in body language, the conjugal act signifies not only love, but potential fecundity; to try artificially to separate the two is illicit, because both pertain to the intimate truth of the act and one is activated with and by means of the other. The conjugal act deprived of the procreative component of its interior truth ceases also to be an act of love. Such an act involves a bodily union that does not correspond to the interior truth and dignity of personal communion; the language does not speak the truth of self-mastery, reciprocal gift and the reciprocal acceptance of the

other person. This violation of the interior order of conjugal union and the order of the person is the essential evil of the contraceptive act.

- 4) Responsible fertility involves the ethically right and lawful regulation of fertility. This means the couple first fully value the blessings of family life and secondly acquire self-mastery. Only through control of their natural drives will the expression of marital love conform to right order. This is especially true regarding periodic continence, which is a shining witness to their chastity, which not only doesn't hinder their love but enhances and humanizes it. This persevering self-discipline helps them fully develop their personalities and helps the family. A morally right regulation of fertility demands of them a definite family and procreative attitude. The theology and pedagogy of the body has its roots in a theology of the family and leads to it.
- 5) Conjugal chastity is manifested in the self-mastery of periodic continence. This is a case of living according to the Spirit (Gal 5:25) and apply it to periodic continence. Even though the timing of continence comes from "natural rhythms," the continence itself is a moral virtue, which leads to a virtuous character. It is not just a "technique" but an ethics. This ethics involves respecting the order of the Creator (norm) as well as a moral immediate motivation. This begins with admitting that one is not master of life, but minister of the Creator's design (HV 13). Concerning the immediate motivation, HV 16 describes "reasonable grounds... arising from the physical or psychological condition of husband or wife, or from external circumstances." Periodic continence is "natural" and conforms to the "natural law," which is the "order of nature" (the Creator's plan for man) in the field of procreation understood by right reason. The virtuous character of periodic continence is not determined by fidelity to an impersonal "natural law" but by fidelity to the Creator, the source and Lord of the order manifested in the law. To reduce the teaching of HV to mere biological regularity is to misinterpret it. This regularity is an expression of the order of nature created by divine providence. Man's true good consists in following it, because it corresponds to the truth of the person and to his dignity as a rational and free being. Morally correct regulation of fertility consists in rereading the language of the body in truth, especially the "natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions." The body speaks even with the internal structures of the organism and contributes to the dialogue of husband and wife called as persons to communion in "union of the body." The language of the body isn't aimed at "reducing ethics to biology" but in re-reading what the body says about the real good and true dignity of the person and following it at the cost of a precise self-denial (HV 21).
- 6) The use of infertile periods can be an abuse if the couple, for unworthy reasons, seeks in this way to avoid having children. The morally correct number of children must take into account not just one's own family, the state of health and means of the couple, but also the good of society, the Church and the whole of mankind. Responsible parenthood also means the willingness to accept a larger family, since it implies a relationship with the objective moral order instituted by God interpreted by right conscience. Thus it involves the moral maturity of the person. *Periodic continence is more than an adequate "method" for acting, but the "method" tied to the ethical dimension proper to it.* By considering the "natural method" only as a method, divorced from its ethical dimension, people get confused. To understand HV, we have to understand both the method and its ethics together. For this ethics, we have to consider self-mastery and continence, without which we won't achieve the moral or anthropological truth of the topic, which is rooted deeply in the theology and pedagogy (teaching) of the body. Of self-discipline, HV 21 writes that it brings tranquillity and peace to the family, fosters in the spouses thoughtfulness and loving consideration, repels excessive self-love, arouses consciousness of responsibilities, and gives them a deeper and more effective influence in the education of their children, who develop a right sense of values regarding the true blessings of life and of self-mastery.

### C. The spirituality of the couple based on HV

- 1) HV calls couples to a spirituality, to seeing their questions and problems within the context of God's law and grace, calling them to respond in love and freedom to their Christian vocation confirmed and made more explicit by the sacrament of marriage, in which they seek holiness and bear witness to Christ and to this loving, joyful holiness in the world. Their love for each other is inseparably united to the cooperation they give to God's love (HV 25). In showing the moral evil of the contraceptive act and the internal framework of the "honest" practice of fertility regulation, HV creates the premises for a Christian

spirituality — taken from biblical sources — of the conjugal vocation, of parenthood and the family. The theology-pedagogy of the body constitutes the essential nucleus of conjugal spirituality. Responsible parenthood, understood integrally, is nothing other than an important element of conjugal and family spirituality and the conjugal vocation. The sacrament of marriage strengthens them in their conjugal consecration, to enter through the “narrow gate” and “hard way” to life. HV is marked by Christian realism, not only of challenges but of spiritual “powers” (graces) that can guide them with faith and hope to the fulfillment of their evangelical vocation. The most essential and fundamental “power” is the love poured into our hearts by the HS, which allows them to build their whole life according to the truth of the “sign” of the sacrament. Couples are called to implore this divine help in prayer, draw grace and love from the Eucharist and overcome their sins in Reconciliation. These are the infallible and indispensable means for forming the Christian spirituality of married and family life.

- 2) Love subjectively is a power or capacity of the human soul to participate in that love with which God himself loves in the mystery of creation and redemption. This love “rejoices” in the truth of creation which was “very good.” Concupiscence tries to detach the “language of the body” from the truth, and love battles to strengthen it. True love is also a moral virtue, oriented toward the fullness of good, and therefore safeguards the inseparable connection between the conjugal act’s two meanings, personal communion and responsible parenthood. Love is a higher power that the spouses receive from God in their matrimonial consecration to coordinate their life together. The power of love correctly unites the two meanings and excludes in theory and in practice any contradiction between them. There may be a tension or difficulty (coming from concupiscence), but not a contradiction, as many allege. Love is not able to be realized in body language unless concupiscence is overcome. Real love is linked by nature with chastity in self-mastery and (periodic) continence. HV develops this biblical truth about conjugal and family spirituality, but to be clearer, we need a deeper analysis of the virtue of continence and its significance for the truth of body language in married life.
- 3) Continence is part of the virtue of temperance and consists in the capacity to dominate, control and direct drives of a sexual nature and their consequences in the psychosomatic subjectivity of man. When it is a constant disposition of the will, it is a virtue. For man to succeed in mastering sexual and sensual impulse, desire and concupiscence, must learn self-control through concrete practice. This education involves perceiving the values in the law, the formation of firm convictions, and the respective disposition of the will. This continence, or self-mastery, is a fundamental condition for the truth of the reciprocal body language and for the couple to “defer to one another out of reverence for Christ.” This common deference is to the truth of body language through the gift of fear of the Lord accompanying the virtue of continence. Continence doesn’t battle concupiscence of the flesh alone, but in concert with prudence, justice, fortitude and charity; therefore, it not only resists concupiscence (which makes the person blind to higher values), but opens the person to the values of the nuptial significance of the body and the freedom of the gift in interpersonal communion and to the power of love. Continence therefore allows the person to perceive, love and practice the language of the body, enriching, purifying, simplifying and deepening the couple’s mutual dialogue. The asceticism of continence therefore doesn’t impoverish “affective manifestations” but makes them more spiritually intense. It helps one realize the dignity proper to the conjugal act’s potentially procreative meaning as well as the meaning of the personal communion flowing from the richness of femininity and masculinity. Conjugal chastity — more than continence — protects the importance and dignity of the conjugal act in relation to its procreative meaning, but safeguards its dignity as an expression of interpersonal union, revealing the other possible “manifestations of affection” that can express this communion. It prevents harm to the couple’s communion when for just reasons they should abstain and helps to form through proper “affective manifestations” the terrain under which the decision for a morally right conjugal act matures.
- 4) Continence, rather than causing inner tensions for man, is the only way to free man from such tensions. It strives spiritually to express body language truthfully in “manifestations of affection.” Responsible parenthood corresponds to the personal dignity of the couple as parents, to the truth of their person and the conjugal act. HV pointed to man as a personal subject and defended him against “means” that make him the object of manipulations and depersonalize him. The psychological study of man affirms that in male-female relationships, there are two reactions, “excitement” and “emotion,” which appear joined, but can be differentiated with regard to their “object.” Excitement is corporeal and sensual, and tends toward

the conjugal act which includes the possibility of procreation; emotion responds to and is caused by the other person as a whole, and does not per se tend toward the conjugal act (and its potentially procreative meaning), but toward “manifestations of affection” in which the spousal meaning of the body is expressed. Continence is not principally the ability to “abstain” through self-mastery, but the ability to direct respective reactions and keep “excitement” and “emotion” in balance, so that there is a balance in body language between the communion of intimate union and the acceptance of responsible parenthood. Continence directs the line of excitement toward its correct development and love of emotion toward “pure” and disinterested interior intensification. The conjugal act should involve the deep emotion of the other person.

- 5) The periodic rhythms of human fertility can provide a providential index for responsible parenthood, but responsible parenthood must also be a “proof of a mature conjugal love,” which involves ethics and spirituality. The knowledge of fertility rhythms alone doesn’t create the interior freedom of the gift, but the practice of periodic continence as a virtue directing the sensual and emotive reactions make possible both mature self-possession and self-gift. The mature virtue of continence gradually reveals the “pure” aspect of the spousal meaning of the body allowing for communion of persons.
- 6) The fundamental element of married spirituality is the HS’s gift of love poured into their hearts. This love is united to chastity, which, manifesting itself as continence, orders married life interiorly. Chastity orders “manifestations of affection.” There cannot be a true communion of persons through “one flesh” union except through the HS, who “gives life.” The HS helps the couple pray and benefit from the sacraments, especially Penance. Chastity is a virtue connected with the gift of piety that helps them adhere to each other out of reverence for Christ. This gift of piety makes them sensitive to the mystery of their vocation in creation and redemption and for the two-fold meaning of the conjugal act in reverencing the personal dignity of the other. The gift of reverence helps to appreciate the “natural cycles of fertility” and the body language this bespeaks. There is also the gift of salvific fear, which does not want to degrade the sign of the divine and fights against concupiscence of the flesh. Only by living “in the Spirit” can the Christian spirituality of married and family life become interiorly true and authentic.
- 7) The gift of piety, together with love and chastity, helps us to understand the exceptional significance, dignity and allied responsibility of the conjugal act among the various “manifestations of affection.” Piety, love and chastity mold the couple’s spirituality to protect the dignity of the body language of the act and its procreative potential within God’s plan as well as protect the dignity of the other person. The antithesis of conjugal spirituality is the contraceptive practice and mentality, which greatly harms man’s interior culture. Concupiscence interiorly constricts the mutual freedom of the gift manifested in the spousal meaning of the body. Respect for God’s plan frees the person from reducing the other “I” to a mere object. The spiritual, disinterested appreciation for the other in God links all “affectionate manifestations” to this true spousal meaning — making love “all day long” — even though they share in the conjugal act only in given circumstances. They grow in appreciation for the “visible” and “invisible” beauty of femininity and masculinity and for the disinterested gift of the other. Through this spiritual identification with the other in “affectionate manifestations,” each helps the other remain faithful and chaste, guided by respect for what is created by God. This is the interior climate suitable for personal communion, in which “responsible” procreation rightly matures. They then live in interior harmony, the interior truth of the “language of the body,” which speaks inseparably truth and love.

#### D. Summary and conclusions

- 1) JP II proposes that this four-year catechesis could be entitled “Human love in the divine plan” or, more precisely, “The redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage.”
- 2) He says the catechesis can be divided into two parts:
  - a) A study of Christ’s words, analyzed in the totality of the Gospel text: his reference to “the beginning” in discussion on the unity and indissolubility in marriage; his words concerning concupiscence as “adultery committed in the heart”; and what he said about the resurrection of the body.
  - b) The analysis of the sacrament based on Ephesians, which goes back to the “beginning” of marriage (Gen 2:24).
- 3) The term “theology of the body” is a working term, which was necessary to establish on a wider foundation the theme “the redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage.” The “theology of

- the body” goes beyond these reflections to include, for example, suffering and death. But the reflections on the redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage can be done from the beginning of Revelation on the reality of the human body (in Genesis), the basis of the theology of the body.
- 4) The reflections on the sacrament of marriage considered its two essential dimensions: the covenant and grace (res) and the dimension of sign (sacramentum). We looked at each of these (as well as HV) through the theology of the body based on Christ’s words. HV is organically related to the sacramentality of marriage and the theology of the body, since the “redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage” constitute an ample commentary on HV’s doctrine. This catechesis faced questions raised with regard to HV and responded to Paul VI’s call to examine the explanation of truth in this area. *Familiaris Consortio* in 1981 appealed to theologians to elaborate more completely the biblical and personalistic aspects of HV’s doctrine in both the formulation of questions and the search for adequate answers, which is the methodological direction of the theology of the body.
    - a) The analysis of the Bible places the doctrine on the foundation of Revelation, which is crucial for theological development, which is based on a continual restudying of the deposit of Revelation.
    - b) The questions posed by man through the intense development of philosophical anthropology (especially resting on ethics) mirror the theological and ethical questions of HV.
    - c) The analysis of personalistic aspects of the doctrine is crucial, because real progress must be on the basis of the “person” — what is good for man as man and what corresponds to his essential dignity — and not “things.” Man’s development must be “ethical” and not just “technological.”
  - 5) The catechesis dedicated to HV constitutes only one part of the redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage. The questions relevant there, however, permeate all the reflections and respond to contemporary questions. The catechesis on HV is not “artificially added,” but is organically and homogeneously united with the rest. While chronologically at the end, it’s conceptually also at the beginning. *Familiaris Consortio* fully confirmed the doctrine of HV.
  - 6) The most important and essential moment in these reflections is the conclusion that to face, formulate and answer the questions raised by HV, we need to find the biblical-theological sphere alluded to in the “redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage.” Here we find the answers to the perennial questions in the conscience of man and to the questions of the modern world concerning marriage and procreation.