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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.
- Two main parts:
 - Words of Christ (on the Redemption of the Body)
 - Sacramentality of Marriage
 - 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
 - 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