



## A Theology of the Body “Crash Course”

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# Table of Contents:

<b>A Theology of the Body “Crash Course” .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>God &amp; Sex.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Theology of the Body Basics.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Theology of the Body Terms &amp; References.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Terms:.....	5
References:.....	5
<b>Talk 1: “From the Beginning” .....</b>	<b>6</b>
The Most Fundamental Human Questions.....	6
What is Man?.....	6
The Body as a “Theology” .....	6
God’s Mystery and the Spousal Analogy.....	6
Christ Points Us Back to the Beginning.....	7
Original Solitude.....	7
Original Unity.....	8
Original Nakedness.....	8
Original Sin.....	9
The Entrance of Shame.....	9
<b>Talk 2: “Adultery in the Heart” .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Adultery in the Heart.....	11
Freedom from the Law and the “New Ethos” .....	11
The Redemption of the Body.....	12
Grace and Effort.....	12
Purity of Heart.....	13
Masters of Suspicion.....	13
<b>Talk 3: “Marks of God’s Love... The Language of the Body” .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Overused & Undervalued.....	14
The Four Loves:.....	14
Ethos as an Inner Power of Eros.....	15
Marks of God’s Love.....	15
The Four Marks of God’s Love.....	16
What is Sexual Honesty?.....	17
Signs of a Mature Love.....	17
Personhood.....	17
The Joy and the Challenge.....	18
<b>Talk 4: “What Does This Mean For My Life?..... What Does This Mean For Your Life?” .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Sexual Honesty.....	19
The Marriage of Tobias and Sarah.....	19
“My Sister, My Bride” .....	19
The Essence of Chastity.....	20
Your Marriage.....	20
A Sacrament.....	20
Responsible Parenthood – Natural Family Planning.....	22
The Effects of Contraception.....	22
Same-Sex Attraction.....	22
How to Change the Ethos?.....	23
<b>Sources.....</b>	<b>25</b>

## God & Sex

*Man cannot live without love.*

*He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer “fully reveals man to himself”.*

*He must, so to speak, enter into [Christ] with all his own self, he must “appropriate” and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself.*

*How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he “gained so great a Redeemer”, and if God “gave his only Son “in order that man “should not perish but have eternal life.”*

*In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man’s worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say: the Good News. It is also called Christianity*

*-Pope John Paul II, (Redemptor Hominis, 10).*

# Theology of the Body Basics

1. God created this world and you on purpose and out of love.
2. Human beings are made in God's image and likeness, and originally (before the Fall), Man and Woman had "right relationship" with God, others, and self.
3. Human beings are made of soul and body ("you are your body")
4. What you do with your body matters.
5. Jesus reveals the innermost secret of God: He is an eternal exchange of love (this means that your innermost identity is love as well).
6. The body has a language and we can either use that language for the purpose for which we were created (love) or we can tell lies with our bodies.
7. Jesus reveals and makes possible loving as God loves (through His self-offering in the life and on the Cross...and in the Eucharist and by giving us the Holy Spirit that can untwist what has been twisted by sin: restore the relationship with God, others, and ourselves.)

# Theology of the Body Terms & References

## Terms:

**Adequate Anthropology:** A total vision of man and of his vocation, not only his natural and earthly, but also his supernatural and eternal vocation”

**Concupiscence:** The disordering of our passions that resulted from original sin.

**Incarnation:** The fact that the Son of God assumed human nature and became man in order to accomplish our salvation in that same human nature.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, is both true God and true man, not part God and part man.

**Hope:** The theological virtue by which we desire and expect from God both eternal life and the grace we need to attain it.

**Love:** Willing the good of the other.

**Theology:** The study of God, it does not naturally seek to prove God’s existence; it takes God’s existence as fact.

**Nature of a Thing:** the “what-it-is-ness” of a thing. We can find out the nature of a thing by asking the question: what is it for?

## References:

**BXVI:** Pope Benedict XVI

**CCC:** *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**CTH:** *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, John Paul II

**CW:** Christopher West

**DC:** *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI’s encyclical letter “God is Love”

**DV:** *Dominum et Vivificantem*, John Paul II’s encyclical letter on the Holy Spirit

**GS:** *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World

**HV:** *Humane Vitae*, Paul VI’s encyclical letter concerning the regulation of births

**KW:** Karol Wojtyla

**LR:** *Love and Responsibility*, Karol Wojtyla’s philosophical work on human sexuality

**MD:** *Mulieris Dignitatem*, John Paul II’s Apostolic Letter to Families in the Year of the Family

**TOB:** *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, John Paul II’s general audience addresses on Human Love in the Divine Plan, Michael Waldstein translation

# Talk 1: “From the Beginning”

“The person who does not decide to love forever will find it very difficult to really love for even one day.” ~JPII

## The Most Fundamental Human Questions

The Structure of the Teaching

- Pope Paul VI *Humanae Vitae*: a call for a deeper theology expressing the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.
- John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*
- Based on Sacred Scripture
  - What does it mean to be human? (“adequate anthropology”)
  - How am I supposed to live in a way that brings true happiness?

## What is Man?

“The body, in fact, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God, and thus to be a sign of it” (TOB, 76).

## The Body as a “Theology”

- Theology is the “study of God”. How can the body be a theology?
- The very “logic” of Christianity.
- Through the fact that the Word of God became flesh the body entered theology...through the main door” (TOB, 89)
- “The flesh is the hinge of salvation” (Tertullian).

Because God is “hidden,” he has chosen to reveal Himself in and through the flesh. In this, He has revealed His innermost secret.

## God’s Mystery and the Spousal Analogy

“God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange” (CCC, 221).

Scripture employs many images to describe God’s relationship with humanity. Each has its own valuable place But the spousal image is used most often.

- God wanted this eternal plan of love and communion to be so obvious to us that he stamped an image of it in our very being by creating us male and female (CW, 3).
- **Definition of Love:** Willing the good of the other.

*This message is about freedom. It is not about repression or moralizing. It is simply an invitation to reflect on God's Word and our own experience to see if the love held out in the Bible is the love we really yearn for.*

## **Christ Points Us Back to the Beginning**

*Some Pharisees approached him, and tested him, saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?" He said in reply, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." They said to him, "Then why did Moses command that the man give the woman a bill of divorce and dismiss [her]?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) and marries another commits adultery." [His] disciples said to him, "If that is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." He answered, "Not all can accept [this] word, but only those to whom that is granted. Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it" (Matthew 19:3-12).*

- From the beginning...
  - "Then God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'...So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply..." (Genesis 1:26-28).
- We are made to live and love like God by pouring ourselves out in life-giving, selfless love.

## **Original Solitude**

**"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone'" (Gen 2:18).**

The man is not just "alone" without the opposite sex, but that the human being is "alone" in the visible world as a person.

- It is in his solitude that man seeks and demands an answer to the question: Who am I?
- "Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons" (CCC 357).

**Adam realizes by his body that he's made for the other.**

## **Original Unity**

**“So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and ... made {it} into a woman...Then the man said, ‘this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.’ Genesis 2:21-23**

- Like the experience of solitude, unity reveals that man and woman are created in God’s image.
- “On seeing the woman created by God, man’s first words express wonder and admiration, or even better, the sense of fascination” (TOB 108:5) He seems to say, Look, a body that expresses the ‘person!’” (TOB 14:4)
- Becoming “one flesh” refers not only to the joining of two bodies but is “a ‘sacramental’ expression which corresponds to the communion of persons” (TOB, 123).
- “Man becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion.” In other words, man images God “not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons which man and woman form right from the beginning.... On all this, right from the beginning, there descended the blessing of fertility linked with human procreation” (TOB, 46).

**Man “cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself” (GS, 24).  
“Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen 2:24).**

## **Original Nakedness**

**“And the man and woman were naked, and were not ashamed” (Gen 2;25).**

This is the “key” for understanding God’s original plan.

- Nakedness reveals the nuptial meaning of the body which is the body’s “capacity of expressing love: that love precisely in which the person becomes a gift and—by means of this gift—fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence” (TOB, 63).
- They experienced sexual desire only as the desire to love in God’s image. There is no shame (or fear) in love.
- Only look at each other.
- Signifies the original good of the divine vision. It signifies...the ‘pure’ value as male and female, the ‘pure’ value of the body and sex” (TOB, 13:1).

**“The fact that they were ‘not ashamed’ means that the woman was not an ‘object’ for the man nor him for her” (TOB, 75).**

**They “see and know each other, in fact, with all the peace of the interior gaze” (TOB, 57).**



## **Original Sin**

**“You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:4-5).**

When man conceives God as a tyrant, he is goaded to do battle against his Maker so as not to be enslaved.

- Lack of faith = grasping.
- If original sin is the denial of the gift, “faith, in its deepest essence, is the openness of the human heart to the gift: to God’s self-communication in the Holy Spirit” (DV, 51).
- **“By casting doubt** in his heart on the deepest meaning of the gift, that is, on love as the specific motive of the creation and of the original covenant, man turns his back on God-Love, on ‘the Father’. He in some sense casts him from his heart. At the same time, therefore, he detaches his heart...from that which ‘comes from the Father’ [and] what is left in him is what ‘comes from the world’” (TOB, 26:4).

“This is truly the key for interpreting reality. ...Original sin, then, attempts to abolish fatherhood” (CTH, 228).

## **The Entrance of Shame**

**“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. ... ‘I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself’” (Gen 3: 7,10).**

Genesis speaks explicitly about the birth of shame in connection with sin. That shame is, as it were, the first source of the manifestation in man-in both the man and the woman – of what “does not come from the Father, but from the world.” (TOB 26:5)

### **They Knew They Were Naked**

- The body and gender difference are now blamed for the rupture caused by sin, but this is a cover-up— almost an excuse not to face the disorder of the heart.
- Nakedness once revealed participation in holiness and grace, now it reveals their loss.
- Shame touches man and woman at their “deepest level and seems to shake the very foundations of their existence” (TOB, 27,1).
- From this moment on, shame will cause a “fundamental disquiet in the whole of human existence” (TOB, 28.3).

### **Twofold Meaning**

- “Shame has a twofold meaning: it indicates the threat to the value [of the person] and at the same time preserves this value in an interior way” (TOB, 28,6).

- Shame also has a positive meaning as “a natural form of self-defense for the person against the danger of descending or being pushed into the position of an object for sexual use” (LR, 182).

“Man [is ashamed] of the body because of lust. More exactly, he [is ashamed] not so much of the body, but more precisely of lust” (TOB, 28,5).

The “**Second’ Discovery of Sex ...** differs radically from the first” (TOB, 29,4). Rather than finding themselves **united** in their masculinity and femininity, sexual difference now **divides** them and sets them against each other (TOB 30).

- Lust involves a stooping to the level of animals; it is reduction of man’s original fullness and freedom. Lust seeks “the sensation of sexuality” apart from a true communion of persons (TOB 29).
- Therefore a lustful union can never satisfy the desires of the heart for love and communion. This is **“the insatiability of the union.”**
- Because of sin, man and woman’s “mutual attraction, the Creator’s own gift, changed into a relationship of domination and lust” (CCC, 1607).
- Lust “is not always plain and obvious; sometimes it is concealed, so that it passes itself off as ‘love’... Does this mean that we should distrust the human heart? No! it is only to say that we must remain in control of it” (TOB, 32).

**“The heart has become a battlefield between love and lust. The more lust dominates the heart, the less the [heart] experiences the nuptial meaning of the body” (TOB, 126).**

# Talk 2: “Adultery in the Heart”

## Adultery in the Heart

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt 5:27-28).

- “Are we to fear the severity of these words, or rather have confidence in their salvific...power?” (TOB, 159).

The heritage of our hearts “is deeper than the sinfulness inherited, deeper than lust...The words of Christ... reactivate that deeper heritage and give it real power in man’s life” (TOB, 168).

## Freedom from the Law and the “New Ethos”

If “you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law” (Gal 5:18)

- We all know that laws, in and of themselves, do not change hearts.
- Christ did not come to give us more “rules” to follow; He came to change our hearts (ethos) so that we would no longer need the rules.

### **Ethos:**

Refers to our inner world, what attracts and repulses us.

- In effect, Christ says, “You’ve heard the commandment not to commit adultery, but the problem is you desire to commit adultery.”
- Those bound by lust “experience God’s law as a burden, and indeed as...as restriction of their own freedom. On the other hand, those who are impelled by love...feel an interior urge...not to stop at the minimum demands of the Law, but to live them in their ‘fullness.’ This is a still uncertain and fragile journey as long as we are here on earth, but it is one made possible by grace” (VS, 18).

**Freedom from the law means not having a desire to break it. Those compelled do not want to stop at the minimum demands of the law.**

## **The Redemption of the Body**

We “groan inwardly as we wait for...the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:23).

We must accept the tension of “already – but not yet.” In this life we will always be able to recognize a “system of forces” at war within us. Victory is gradual.

- The “redemption of the body’ ...expresses itself not only in the resurrection as victory over death. It is present also in the words of Christ addressed to ‘historical’ man [when] Christ invites us to overcome concupiscence, even in the exclusively inner movements of the human heart” (TOB 86:6).

Redemption of the body is something we begin to live now.

## **Grace and Effort**

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery....For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another” (Galatians 5: 1, 13).

**Grace:** The free and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to our vocation to become his adopted children.

- As sanctifying grace, God shares his divine life and friendship with us in a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that enables the soul to live with God, to act by his love.
- As actual grace, God gives us the help to conform our lives to his will.
- Sacramental grace and special graces (charisms, the grace of one’s state of life) are gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our Christian vocation.

**The Three Indispensable and Infallible Means of Grace:**

- Prayer
- Confession
- Eucharist

**Effort: Discipline & Commitment**

“Those who seek the fulfillment of their own human and Christian vocation in marriage are called first of all to make...this “theology of the body”...the content of their lives and behavior. (TOB 23:5).

- Balance the notion of freedom with the truth that we are still in need of redemption.
- This redemption is true freedom, but it requires some kind of training and discipline.
  - The power of the Cross
  - The need for training

## **Purity of Heart**

**“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God” (Mt 5:8).**

Mature Christian purity affords the ability to see God’s mystery revealed in the human body and in man and woman’s call to communion.

- “Even now [purity of heart] enables us to see according to God..., it lets us perceive the human body –
- ours and our neighbor’s – as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of divine beauty.” (CCC 2519)
- Purity often has a negative connotation...it means NOT doing something...but it is actually a positive move.
- Seeing the PERSON.

## **Pornography**

"The problem with pornography is not that it reveals too much of the person (exposed in the image), but that it reveals too little of the person. The person in the image is reduced to their sexual organs and sexual faculties and is thereby de-personalized," (JPII).

## **Masters of Suspicion**

Redemption does not magically remove the consequences of sin in this life. We still suffer, get ill, grow old, struggle with weaknesses and the pull of lust, etc (see CCC 978, 1226, 1264, 1426). Yet, the reality of sin must not cause us to hold the human heart in continual suspicion.

## Talk 3: “Marks of God’s Love... The Language of the Body”

God is Love. We most clearly image God when we love. We love in and through our bodies. Love requires action.

### Overused & Undervalued

“Today, love is overused and undervalued at the same time. We love everything from various foods to cars, from movies to retailers, from people to God himself. We may not consciously distinguish one use of love from another, in part because our speech is becoming more and more informal, but it’s important to be intentional about the differences. As we know, Scripture tells us that love is the highest attribute. So let’s look at the four types of love found in human life. (Kincaid, [“The Four Loves”](#))

### The Four Loves:

1. **Storge (Affection):** It’s the familiarity of, “the people with whom you are thrown together in the family, the college, the mess, the ship, the religious house,” says Lewis. The affection for the people always around us, in the normal day-to-day of life, is the majority of the love we experience, even if we don’t label it.
2. **Eros (Love of Desire):** The fire / passion necessary to show love. The inner power which attracts man to the good, true, and the beautiful. Different than friendship, lovers, “are always talking to one another about their love” and “are normally face to face, absorbed in each other,” says Lewis. The danger in romantic love is to follow blindly after a feeling of passion.
3. **Philia (Friendship):** “Friendship must be about something,” Friendship allows individuals to walk side by side with something in common. C.S. Lewis says, “those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow-travelers.”
4. **Agape (Self-Sacrificing):** the unconditional love of the Father given to us through his Son.

*“There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell” (C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*).*

## **Ethos as an Inner Power of Eros**

Is eros nothing more than lust? Is it always lust?

- Eros, at its deepest level, is that inner power that ‘attracts’ man to the true, the good, and the beautiful” (TOB, 47).
- When erotic “passion is set into the whole of the spirit’s deepest energies, it can also become a creative force; in this case, however, it must undergo a radical transformation” (TOB, 39).
- “An intoxicated and undisciplined eros, then, is not an ascent in ‘ecstasy’ towards the Divine, but a fall, a degradation of man. Evidently, eros needs to be disciplined and purified if it is to provide not just a fleeting pleasure, but a certain foretaste of the pinnacle of our existence, of that beatitude for which our whole being yearns” (Benedict XVI, DC, 4).

Love “promises infinity, eternity – a reality far greater and totally other than our everyday existence. Yet we have also seen that the way to attain this goal is not simply by submitting to instinct.

Purification and growth in maturity are called for; and these also pass through the path of renunciation. Far from rejecting or ‘poisoning’ eros, they heal it and restore its true grandeur” BXVI, DC, 5).

## **Marks of God’s Love**

**If there is no standard in the world of what love should look like, where should we look?**

Ephesians 5:

*“Wives and Husbands. “Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So [also] husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man shall leave [his] father and [his] mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband. (Ephesians 5: 21-33, NAB).*

## **The Four Marks of God's Love**

**This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12)  
“Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen 2:24)**

### **Free:**

A gift is something that must be freely given. If someone is forced to do something, or strongly pressured, or acting out of fear, it is not really a gift. So, too, in marriage, the man and woman must freely embrace the commitments and responsibilities of this vocation, without coercion, undue pressure or great fear. Placing conditions on one's love is another way of contradicting the freedom of one's gift of self in marriage.

### **Total:**

Spouses are called to give themselves completely to the other and to receive the other person completely in return. This mutual gift of self is at the heart of what is expressed in sexual relations in marriage, in which spouses symbolize and express the total gift of self and total reception of the other which makes them not only one body, but one spirit.

The total gift of self also includes the gift of fertility, which is an integral part of the spouses' identity as a man and as a woman. Contraception entails some manner of withholding one's fertility from one's spouse or rejecting his or her fertility, and this contradicts God's plan for sex as a sign and expression of total self-giving. It also suppresses the life-giving potential of sex and in so doing strikes at the heart of the fruitfulness which is one of the characteristics of married love.

### **Faithful:**

The gift of self must be faithful. The gift of self in marriage is faithful and exclusive until the end of one's life or one's spouse's life on earth. This lifelong fidelity is not easy, since all married couples go through times of difficulty, but God's grace offers them the ability to give of themselves for the good of each other and their children, and even to grow in love through times of sacrifice and suffering.

### **Fruitful:**

In marriage, the couple pledges to be open to accepting children from God and raising them as His sons and daughters. Any and every method of artificial contraception would be a violation of fruitful love.

**Therefore, our love must have these marks or it is not love.**



## **What is Sexual Honesty?**

We all recognize that the body has a language. We also realize that it is possible to contradict this language, to speak a lie with the body.

Truth and love go hand in hand. Lying is a contradiction of love. It simply can never be an act of true love to speak a lie with the body.

### **Sexual Honesty Means:**

- Accepting and respecting the language of love that God inscribed in our bodies when He created us in His own image as male and female.
- Learning to love as God loves in all our expressions of affection and intimacy.
- Above all, it means never using another person (in thought or action) as a means of sexual gratification.

## **Signs of a Mature Love**

**Love reaches its maturity when it turns from how the other makes me feel to who the other person is.**

### **How do we distinguish between authentic love and lust?**

- “Not always plain and obvious; sometimes it is concealed, so that it passes itself off as love” (TOB, 126).
- Lust impels people very powerfully towards physical intimacy. But if this grows out of nothing more than lust it is not love. On the contrary it is a negation of love (see LR, 150).
- Love reaches its maturity when it turns from how the other makes me feel to who the other person is.
- Every person is totally unique and unrepeatable.

## **Personhood**

**Every person is totally unique and unrepeatable. Qualities are repeatable.**

“Only the value of the person can sustain a stable relationship. The other values of sexuality are wasted away in time and are exposed to the danger of disillusion. But this is not the case for the value of the person, ...which is stable and in some way infinite.

When love develops and reaches the person, then it is forever.” (KW, 100)

- No person can **ever** be compared to another, measured by, or replaced by another. Authentic love is attracted not just by “attributes” or “qualities” of a person.
- Qualities are repeatable—they can always be found in others and to a higher degree. If love stops here, a permanent shadow is cast over the permanency of the relationship.

- “Only the value of the person can sustain a stable relationship. The other values of sexuality are wasted away by time and are exposed to the danger of disillusion. But this is not the case for the value of the person,...which is stable and in some way infinite. When love develops and reaches the person, then it is forever” (KW, 100).

### **The Joy and the Challenge**

Sexual honesty brings true joy because it expresses true love. But this joy also comes at a high price. Sexual honesty presents a serious challenge, particularly in today’s world in which sex has been virtually sapped of its **inherent marital meaning**.

- Because we’ve all been so deeply affected by society’s sexual confusion, coming to understand and embrace God’s plan for sexual union is among the most important things you can do to prepare for your vocation.

# Talk 4: “What Does This Mean For My Life? What Does This Mean For Your Life?”

## Sexual Honesty

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12)

All questions of sexual morality come down to one basic question:

- Is this an authentic sign of God’s free, total, faithful, fruitful love or is it not? Is this a sign of God’s love...or a counter-sign? An anti-sacrament?
- We “can speak of moral good and evil” in the sexual relationship “according to whether...or not it has the character of the truthful sign” (TOB 141,142).

The language of the body has “clear-cut meanings” all of which are “‘programmed’...in the conjugal consent.” For example, to “the question: ‘Are you willing to accept responsibly and with love the children that God may give you...?’ – the man and the woman reply: ‘Yes’” (TOB, 363, 364).

## The Marriage of Tobias and Sarah

“You made Adam and gave him Eve his wife.... And now, O lord, I am not taking this sister of mine because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that I may find mercy and grow old together with her. And [Sarah] said with him, ‘Amen’” (Tobit 8:6-8).

When spouses “unite as husband and wife, they...find themselves in the situation in which *the powers of good and evil fight against each other.*” The “choices and acts [of men and women] take on the whole weight of human existence in the union of the two” (TOB, 115).

## “My Sister, My Bride”

“You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, you have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes.... How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride!” (Song 4:9-10)

“Through the [term] ‘sister’, the bridegroom’s words tend to reproduce...the history of the femininity of the beloved person; they see her still in the time of girlhood (‘We have a little sister, and she still has no breasts’) – and by means of this vision that goes back to the past, these words embrace her entire ‘I,’ soul and body, with a disinterested tenderness” (TOB, 110).

“A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed” (Song, 4:12).

- She is a person created “for her own sake”. She has her own “freedom of the gift.” He cannot manipulate. He cannot barge in. He must entrust himself to her freedom; she might refuse. This is the man’s risk.

- “The bride appears to the eyes of the bridegroom as a ‘garden closed’ and ‘fountain sealed’ [because the] bride **presents herself to the eyes of the man as the master of her own mystery**. One can say that both metaphors...express the whole *personal dignity* ... of that femininity which belongs to the personal structure of self-possession” (TOB, 110).

## **The Essence of Chastity**

The essence of chastity consists in its quickness to affirm the value of the person in every situation, and in raising to the personal level all reactions to a person’s body and sex. It is not a matter of “annihilating” sexual reactions or pushing them into the subconscious where they await an opportunity to explode. Chastity is a matter of sustained long-term integration of sexual values with the value of the person (see LR, 170-171).

## **Your Marriage**

An unshakable, internal commitment to live out your marriage vows faithfully – no matter what the cost, no matter what the sacrifice – is the **first** ingredient required for a successful marriage.

### **Rite of Marriage**

*Marriage is a promise to be a living sign of God’s love.*

- N. and N. have you come here to enter into marriage without coercion, freely and wholeheartedly?
- Are you prepared, as you follow the path of Marriage, to love and honor each other for as long as you both shall live?
- Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

**The three promises are the assurance that this love (eros) promises to be love (agape). Free => Total => Faithful => Fruitful**

## **A Sacrament**

The deepest theological reason contraception is an evil is that the marital embrace becomes an anti-sacrament. The *“anti-epiklesis”*.

- Our “earlier analyses show that in this case the ‘language of the body’ should express...the truth of the sacrament. By participating in the eternal plan of love...the ‘language of the body’ becomes in fact a ‘prophetism of the body,’ as it were.” (TOB, 123).
- When “the conjugal act is deprived of its inner truth, because it is deprived [willfully by the spouses] of its procreative capacity, it also ceases to be an act of love” (TOB, 123).

- All sexual sin is an attempt to get the pleasure apart from the suffering of love.
- Every Christian Church was unanimous in its condemnation of contraception as harmful to marriage and society until 1930. The Anglican Church broke with this teaching and accepted contraception within marriage.
- Catholic, Protestant, and secular writers widely predicted that societies which embraced contraception would experience an increase in adultery, divorce, premarital sex, out-of-wedlock births, abortion, “fatherless” children, poverty, violence, homosexual activity, etc...
- Poverty is a sexual problem. The main group living in poverty: \_\_\_\_\_

**“The freedom that women were supposed to have found in the Sixties largely boiled down to easy contraception and abortion; things to make life easier for men, in fact.  
~ Julie Burchill, “Damaged Goods”**

### **Responsible Parenthood – Natural Family Planning**

- Responsible parenthood involves “common reflection and effort; it also involves [the parents’] consideration of their own good and the good of their children already born or yet to come, an ability to read the signs of the times and of their own situation on the spiritual and material level, and finally an estimation of the good of the family, of society, and of the Church” (GS, 50).
- “For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood” (CCC, 2368).
- 98-99% effective with correct use. (Mother Teresa. Pope John Paul II. Beijing Conference. 26,000 women)

## **The Effects of Contraception**

Below are a number of side effects and potential health risks associated with the use of artificial contraceptives (Benisek, “Birth Control Side Effects and Risks”).

### **Common Side Effects for Combination Contraceptives**

- Weight gain
- Increase or decrease in acne
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Depression
- Vaginal infections
- High blood pressure
- Loss of libido

### **Less Common Serious Health Complications**

- Blood clots in legs, lungs, heart or brain
- Stroke
- Liver tumors
- Heart attacks
- Gallstones
- Jaundice
- Cervical Cancer

## **Same-Sex Attraction**

### **Chastity and Homosexuality**

*CCC 2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained.*

*Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. "They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.*

### **Sexual Complementarity**

*CCC 2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.*

## Called to Chastity

*CCC 2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.*

## How to Change the Ethos?

### Prayer

*Lord, untwist in my heart all that has been twisted by sin. Help me to see this woman/man as your daughter/ son. First let me see her/him as my sister/brother. This person was never made for me to use, but only to be loved. Help me to love her/him as You do.*

“I had thought that [chastity] arose from one’s own powers, which I did not recognize in myself. I was foolish enough not to know...that no one can be [chaste] unless you grant it. For you would surely have granted it if my inner groaning had reached your ears and I with firm faith had cast my cares on you” (St. Augustine, CCC, 2520).

### Discipline.

**“I have made a covenant with my eyes.” (Job 31:1)**

Rooted in the heart, but carried out in action.

“The person [who wants] to succeed in mastering [sexual] impulse and excitement, must be committed to a progressive education in self control of the will, of the feelings, of the emotions; and this education must develop beginning with the most simple acts in which it is relatively easy to put the interior decision into practice” (TOB, 408)

### **“Know Thyself”**

Do not be afraid.

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