

PARACLETE



PUBLICATIONS

A Commentary on St John Paul's Book "The Theology of the Body"

What does St John Paul say?
Have Commentaries overlooked or missed out on his
Central Point?



Contents

Pages 2-4

Have Commentaries missed out on the central point of the Theology of the Body?

Pages 5-58

The Theology of the Body – Selected Passages and Comments

Pages 59-61

Conclusion

A Commentary on the Theology of the Body

1.a Have Commentaries overlooked the central point of the Theology of the Body? Is St John Paul's explosive teaching yet to be appreciated?

The main reason for undertaking this particular study on St John Paul's book *The Theology of the Body* (the TOB) is to highlight something very important in his writings (and maybe even his main point) which commentators appear to have overlooked or missed. This point is what St John Paul teaches concerning the nuptial state of the body which the saints (i.e. those in heaven) will experience in the resurrection in heaven. As will be seen from several passages of the TOB referred to in this study (verbatim passages), St John Paul repeatedly presents the case and postulates the proposition that, in the resurrection, each of us, **whether single, married or celibate, will exist in that nuptial-virginal state intended by God in the beginning as male and female. We will not, therefore, according to St John Paul, exist on our own as male or female (a position often generally assumed) but, rather, in that nuptial state which mirrors the communion of love in the Blessed Trinity.**

Towards the end of the *Theology of the Body*, St John Paul sums up in a few words that which is **consistently** stated throughout his whole thesis and is at the heart of his study, namely that Christ's redeeming love for each and every one of us has a "spousal character and meaning" linked to the "truth of the unity of the spouses" *in the beginning*. St John Paul states that the Saviour of the world came down from heaven to redeem mankind, and the redemption he has won for us is nuptial in its very essence; it has, as he states, a "spousal character and meaning". What was lost in the beginning (i.e. the nuptial state of innocence and love which God intended for our 'first parents' in the Garden of Eden and for all humanity, "the truth about the unity of the spouses", of being "naked" and "unashamed") is restored to us in the nuptial love which Christ has revealed for his Bride, the Church. This is the grace which Christ, our Redeemer, has won for all humanity. It is, as stated above by St John Paul, spousal in nature.

St John Paul sees both Christ's love for his Bride and the love of 'the spouses' which he has redeemed as **inseparably united**. The first is revealed in the second and the second reveals the first. It is not therefore a question, as is often assumed, of the first supplanting the second (i.e. of Christ's love for his Bride supplanting that of 'the spouses'), but, rather of the first saving and living in the second. **This 'saving nuptial truth' applies to every male and female, whether they be married, single or professing the vow of Celibacy.** They will, St John Paul proposes, experience in their bodies in the resurrection in heaven **a nuptial communion of love (in the virginal state) with their respective spouse, in accordance with that life of communion in the Blessed Trinity.** This point is key to our study here, which considers the question: "What, according to St John Paul, is the nuptial joy that the saints will experience in the resurrection of the body in heaven?" For, commenting on *the Theology of the Body*, several scholars give the impression that the Wedding Feast in heaven to which Christ is inviting us in the resurrection supplants and replaces that which God has brought together on earth. Marriage (or more properly speaking 'the nuptial love of the couple'), therefore, it is incorrectly assumed, has ended. The Wedding Feast of Christ has replaced that which God has brought together on earth. The 'first' has replaced the 'second' for the second no longer has any place. This, it is strongly and respectfully proposed, **is not what St John Paul has written.** Rather, St John Paul teaches, it is not a question of a celebration of 'one wedding' over 'the other', namely

Christ's Wedding feast over that which God has brought together on earth, but **it is the celebration of both**. And not only both in an unrelated manner but of both co-existing together, **with the wedding of every spousal couple brought eternally into the Wedding of Christ**, made "members of his body" (Eph 5:30) and "living stones" (1 Pet 2:5) in the New Temple in heaven. **However, the form of marriage that Christ now celebrates in heaven is virginal – according to, but elevating, the primordial sacrament which God intended for the first couple in the beginning**. This new nuptial state which is celebrated in heaven was, according to St John Paul, anticipated in the nuptial but virginal communion of Mary and Joseph. This is why St John Paul sees the vow of Celibacy for the Kingdom of heaven as being of a higher nuptial state than that of married couples. For Celibacy for the sake of heaven points to that form of marriage which awaits the saints in heaven. Celibacy therefore, according to this understanding, **points to marriage and not away from it**, and everybody (whether single, married or celibate) is invited to this true and eternal Wedding Feast.

1.b This Video and Commentary will examine St John Paul's Views

This video and commentary will both quote and paraphrase (with reference made to page numbers) what St John Paul is saying throughout his work on this subject (i.e. the joy of the saints in heaven which we will later see, according to St John Paul, is primarily 'nuptial' in nature). It will make reference to various passages from his book in chronological order. In addition to the verbatim passages cited (these will appear **in red script**), short comments will immediately follow in order to emphasize the significance of what St John Paul is saying.

1.c Why have existing Commentaries on the Theology of the Body missed this essential point made by St John Paul?

Whereas commentaries on the *Theology of the Body* highlight the revolutionary significance of St John Paul's work, it has to be said that those, to date, do not appear to have, in any way, properly or adequately considered the significance of this important aspect of St John Paul's writings (i.e. the nuptial state of the body in the Resurrection). This may be because of the comprehensive phenomenological approach in which St John Paul findings are presented which tend to make it difficult to see this one central, but uniting, theme. It may also be that many of the commentators do not consider as significant the Catholic Church's constant teaching that Adam's spouse (Eve) truly came from his side and that she was therefore of 'one body' with him *in the beginning* – a teaching which is at the heart of St John Paul's work.

1.d The Importance that St John Paul attached to the Theology of the Body

Witnessing the rise of many new challenges to the Christian understanding of human love and marriage in his own country, Poland, and elsewhere throughout 'Christian Europe' (particularly that challenge involving the contraceptive mindset), St John Paul was very concerned that the (positive) teachings of the Church with regard to the relationship of man and woman would be heard. But how should these teachings be taught today? Objective truth coming from outside, and taught as such, no longer seems to hold much sway with people living in Christian countries; only that voice of truth speaking from within the person is now in vogue. For, it is held, this voice is personal and compassionate; it is not cold and dictatorial, it is not impersonal and does not come from outside. But, it must be asked, whether this voice is speaking the truth,

or, whether it is merely the subjective opinion of one person as against another. Is it possible to find a common voice, a universal truth, which, although speaking from within, commands God's authority? The search for this universal truth was St John Paul's quest. This, he believed, could be found by contemplating the words of Christ in several passages of Scripture which reveal that "eternal law" speaking to the heart of man in every time and place. St John Paul was particularly concerned that this truth, contained in the TOB, would be offered to young people to help them use their God-given freedom to experience what he termed as *Human Love in the Divine Plan*.

N.B. As mentioned above, quotes and passages from St John Paul's TOB are provided in red script.



2. The Theology of the Body

The Unity and Indissolubility of Marriage

Page 26

St John Paul begins the *Theology of the Body* by referring to Christ's words about the nature of marriage as it existed *in the beginning* which are found in St Matthew's Gospel in chapter 19. The Pharisees, whom Jesus was addressing, had apparently missed this vital and main point (i.e. about the nature of marriage as it existed *in the beginning*), even though they were teachers of the Law concerning marriage. According to St John Paul, this truth concerning marriage – which Jesus stated to the Pharisees - cannot be found without going back to *the beginning*. Saint John Paul emphasizes on page 26 how **Christ's words confirm the eternal law formulated and set up by God from "the beginning"**, where it is written in Genesis that **God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them**. St John Paul significantly adds that **Christ did not confine himself to the quotation itself** [i.e. the quotation from Genesis above] **but added "so they are no longer two but one flesh; what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder"**. That, "let no man put asunder" is decisive. In light of these words of Christ, Genesis 2:24 sets forth the principle of the unity and indissolubility of marriage as the very content of the Word of God, expressed in the most ancient revelation.

The Original Unity of the Man and Woman *in the Beginning* constitutes the eternal law of God. This unity applies to every couple God has chosen in marriage, this is why marriage is indissoluble.

Page 26

Having considered the state of marriage as God has created it *in the beginning*, St John Paul then goes on to say on page 26 that **it could be maintained at this point that the problem** [i.e. as to why marriage is indissoluble] **is exhausted, that Jesus Christ's words confirm the eternal law formulated and set up by God from the beginning as the creation of man.**

Comment: Two points are made here from the above statement:

(1) St John Paul states that Christ's response to the Pharisees **"confirms the eternal law"**. Christ, according to St John Paul, teaches that **the nuptial relationship of man, created *male and female in the beginning*, cannot end for it belongs to the "eternal law"**. It is the eternal law written into human nature, and it is so **forever**. Divorce (which the Pharisees questioned Jesus about) breaks the eternal law of God, whereby man images God *forever as male and female*.

(2) St John Paul states that once Christ had finished speaking the **"problem is exhausted"**; the words of Christ are enough. No more need be said on the subject, for we have Christ's word for it. The matter is closed. Even though this is the case, even though Christ's words are enough, St John Paul does not leave the matter there. For St John Paul notes how "twice" in his response to the Pharisees, Jesus refers to *the beginning*. (The next paragraph will make further reference

to the significance of this). St John Paul realizes that something very important is hidden in Christ's words here "*in the beginning*" which he feels bound to explore. If Jesus responded to questions about marriage by going back to the beginning, St John Paul does likewise in our own time. It is because of this the TOB was written. The first and pivotal chapter of his book is therefore entitled the "Original Unity of Man and Woman" where St John Paul reflects on the nature of marriage as it existed *in the beginning*.

Today we also need to search for this Truth concerning the Creation of Man as Male and Female *in the beginning*

Page 26

St John Paul writes later on page 26 (emphasis added): **However, that significant expression "from the beginning", repeated twice, clearly induced his interlocutors [i.e. the Pharisees] to reflect on the way in which man was formed in the mystery of creation, precisely as "male and female", in order to understand correctly the normative sense of the words of Genesis. This is no less valid for the people of today than for those at that time. Therefore, in the present study, considering all this, we must put ourselves precisely in the position of Christ's interlocutors today.**

Comment: In the above quotation, St John Paul states that, in addition to the time of Jesus, persons of every age and walk of life also need to reflect on Christ's words. As stated above, this is why St John Paul completed the TOB.

In the Beginning we were created "Male and Female" – the Original Innocence

Page 31

St John Paul states that to understand the true nature of marriage, Christ directs us [as he did the Pharisees in Matthew 19] to go back to the state of original innocence, to that state of man **beyond the boundary** – as male and female – as God intended the nuptial union *in the beginning*. He writes on page 31: **When Christ, referring to "the beginning", directed his questioners [i.e. the Pharisees in Matthew 19] to the words of Genesis 2:24, he ordered them, in a certain sense, to go beyond the boundary.... He did not approve what Moses had permitted "for their hardness of heart". He appealed to the words of the first divine regulation which in this text is expressly linked to man's state of original innocence. This means that this regulation has not lost its force even though man has lost his primitive innocence.**

Comment. Even though we are born with 'the stain of original sin' on our souls and have lost our primitive innocence we must, according to St John Paul, go back and search out that state of marital innocence and love *in the beginning*. "This regulation", St John Paul states, found in the first chapters of Genesis "has not lost its force.... even though man has lost his primitive innocence".

When St John Paul refers to the nuptial state *in the beginning*, he refers to the state of original innocence of the first couple, as male and female, in the Garden of Eden which ultimately was lost through sin. But what was this state. The search for the understanding of this nuptial state

in the beginning, so important in Christ's response to the Pharisees in Matthew 19, was uppermost in St John Paul's mind and is developed by him in the subsequent sections of the first part of the Theology of the Body.

The First and Second Account in Genesis - No dichotomy

Page 30

St John Paul states that the **second account** of the creation of man, the **subjective or psychological** account (in Genesis 2) agrees with the **objective reality of man created in the image of God** in the **first account** (in Genesis 1). He writes: **Comparing both accounts, we conclude that this subjectivity corresponds with the objective reality of man created "in the image of God"**.

Comment: According to St John Paul, there is no dichotomy between the subjective state of innocence and love experienced by the first couple in the Garden of Eden, described in Genesis 2, and the statement of objective truth that man was created in the 'image of God' in Genesis 1. To be created in the "image of God" is to be in a nuptial relationship, for God himself is an interpersonal communion of a 'Trinity of love'. The truth of man in Genesis 1 is known by the special kind of nuptial bond described in Genesis 2. Subjectively, and psychologically, St John Paul appears to say that human nature will flourish if we seek to unite our way of life with that way which God intended for it when we were **first** created. Hence the importance he places on this study and its understanding. The well being of the person is at stake.

The Hebrew Name/Term, אָדָם ("Adam")

Page 30

St John Paul further states on page 30 that **the Bible calls the first human being "man" ('adam) but that, from the moment of the creation of the first woman, it begins to call him "man" (ish), in relation to ishshah ("woman", because she was taken from the man – ish).**

Comment: St John Paul interestingly observes a distinction between the terms, man (Hb 'adam), and male (Hb. ish). The Hebrew term/name 'adam' (אָדָם), St John Paul notes, as used in Genesis "up to the creation of the first woman", refers to the first man 'Adam' **before Eve was created from his side**. Thereafter, he states, "it begins to call him ish". Hence, it might be concluded from St John Paul's words, that the name "Adam" as used in the very early part of Genesis, **refers also to the name of his bride who would later be formed from his side**. In other words Eve's first or real name is "Adam" – a **single name signifying their unity of being formed as 'one body'** (or 'from one body'). That Adam and Eve shared the same name *in the beginning* is confirmed in Genesis 5:2 where we read: "And God blessed them [i.e. the first couple] **and named them Adam** when He created them", (Douai-Rheims Bible, emphasis added). Although several English translations have difficulty with the single name "Adam" being attributed here in the Douai-Rheims (and other English Bibles - eg the King James and the American Standard Bibles) to both the first male and female in Gn 5:2, it should be noted how this translation accords with Sacred Tradition. For the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT Bible) and Vulgate (the Latin translation of the Bible) versions, so highly revered in the Church, similarly translate the Hebrew in Genesis 5:2 according to that sense denoting a person's name. In the Septuagint, although the Greek term ἀνθρώπων (*anthropos*, man) is used

to translate אָדָם in Gn. 1:26 and elsewhere in the Bible, the translator curiously does not use the same term (i.e. ἀνθρώπων) here in Gn. 5:2 but simply translates the Hebrew אָדָם by the proper/personal name “Adam” (Αδάμ) instead. In Greek Αδάμ has only one sense or meaning, which is that denoting a proper (a person’s) name. The Vulgate follows likewise by using the Latin term “hominem” (accusative sing. of homo) in Gn. 1:26-27 (and elsewhere) but also, ominously, does not use the same term (i.e. homo) in Gn. 5:2 but simply gives the proper name, Adam, thus identifying the couple in question by the **name** Adam and negating any other meaning. The Latin term ‘Adam’, like the Greek above, only has one use or meaning, which is that signifying a person’s name. It is clear, therefore, that both the Greek (the Septuagint) and Latin (the Vulgate) translations of the Bible translate Genesis 5:2 as follows (emphasis added) – “*And God blessed **them** (i.e. the first couple) and named **them** Adam when he created **them**”*. As stated above, this shows that the first couple (later named Adam and Eve) shared the one and the same name ‘Adam’ *in the beginning*.

The Words of Genesis apply to Each of Us

Pages 33,34

St John Paul says that Christ’s words about the *original innocence of the first couple in the beginning and the loss of this state though sin* is a dimension of human existence which applies to each one of us, to every person who has existed in history. The **fundamental state** of **historical man** plunges its roots deep into that original state *in the beginning*. St John Paul writes on page 33: **Therefore, right from the beginning, the arising of sinfulness as a state, a dimension of human existence, is in relation to this real innocence of man as his original and fundamental state, as a dimension of his being created in the image of God..... Historical man is, so to speak, rooted in his revealed theological prehistory.** This “theological prehistory” is the experience of each and every one of us, it is written into the human body. Though we participate in this state of sinfulness and loss of original innocence, we also according to St John Paul participate in the redemption of the body offered to us by Christ. St John Paul notes the hope of this redemption of the body in the response Christ made to the Pharisees (when Jesus referred to *the beginning*), a response which St John Paul states would not otherwise be adequately understood. St John Paul writes on pages 33/34: **If that beginning [i.e. the beginning mentioned twice by Christ in Mt 19] indicated only the creation of man as male and female, if - as we have already mentioned – it brought the questioners only over the boundary of man’s state of original innocence, and did not open at the same time the perspective of a “redemption of the body”, Christ’s answer would not at all be adequately understood. Precisely this perspective of the redemption of the body guarantees the continuity and unity between the hereditary state of man’s sin and his original innocence, although this innocence was, historically, lost by him irremediably.**

Comment: St John Paul seems to link – in the strongest possible manner - Christ’s redemption with the original (nuptial) state of innocence which God willed for all of us *in the beginning* as male and female. This is the prize Christ has won for us. Even though “historical man” was lost “irremediably” on account of sin, our bodies will, by Christ’s redeeming grace, be set free to participate in that original state of innocence as male and female, which God willed for us *in the beginning*. Our bodies, groaning inwardly, will be redeemed; they will be set free. St John Paul significantly quotes from St Paul Letter to the Romans in this connection where St John Paul writes: “All the subsequent analyses that will be made on the basis of the first chapters of Genesis will almost certainly reflect the truth of Paul’s words [where in Romans 8

it is written]: “We who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait for... the redemption of our bodies.”

The Solitude of Man (Adam) *in the beginning*

Pages 35,36

St John Paul states that the solitude of man *in the beginning* (see Genesis 2:18) was not simply the solitude of a male person being alone (i.e. without a female companion) but something radically more profound. Concerning this solitude, he writes on page 35: **The complete context of that solitude of which Genesis 2:18 speaks can convince us that it is a question here of the solitude of “man” (male and female) and not just the solitude of man the male, caused by the lack of woman.** Commenting on God’s words when God said “it is not good that man should be alone” (Gn. 2:18), St John Paul writes on page 36: **This appears as a fundamental anthropological problem, prior, in a certain sense, to the one raised by the fact that this man is male and female. The problem is prior not so much in the chronological sense, as in the existential sense.**

Comment: St John Paul presents here a very important point. If this “fundamental anthropological problem” of “man’s solitude” is to be overcome, the first male person created **needs more than just a female companion**, for the problem is “prior ...to the one raised by the fact that the man is male and female”. Even with a female companion, man can suffer from the experience of solitude (“problem... prior.... in the existential sense”). Man (male and female) must experience that original state of nuptial innocence that God willed for them *in the beginning*, **then and then only, St John Paul hints, will the problem of solitude be overcome.** Hence, the importance of the discovery of God’s nuptial state of the body *in the beginning*.

The Deep Sleep of Adam

“a return to the moment preceding the creation, a return to non-being”

Page 44

St John Paul writes on page 44 **that the man (adam) falls into that sleep, in order to wake up “male” and “female”..... Perhaps, therefore, the analogy of sleep indicates here not so much a passing from consciousness to sub-consciousness, as a specific return to non-being ...That is, it indicates a return to the moment preceding the creation...** This “deep sleep” then is a return to a moment before creation, a return to ‘non being’ (i.e. to a time when Adam did not exist, except in God’s mind).

Comment: St John Paul seems to imply in the above paragraph that the male never existed without the female for when ‘the groom’ awakes from the deep sleep, (i.e. from ‘non-being to being’), his bride is with him. This truth is beautifully depicted in Michelangelo’s painting (for a copy of this picture, see page 13 ahead) where **Eve already exists in God’s mind before Adam was created.** This reminds us of the words of the prophet Jeremiah, “before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (Jer. 1:5).

The dream of the man in the “deep sleep” (of God’s mind) reveals the desire in man for finding a “second self”

Page 44

St John Paul says that the joy in the **dream** (i.e. the dream of “deep sleep” of man in God’s mind before creation) of **seeing the woman** is the joy of seeing a second self. He writes on page 44 (emphasis added): **there is no doubt that man falls into that “sleep” with the desire of finding a being like himself. If by analogy with sleep, we can speak here also of a dream, we must say that the biblical archetype allows us to admit as the content of that dream a “second self”..... Joy in the other human being, in the second “self” dominates the words spoken by the man on seeing the woman.**

Comment: St John Paul depicts here that in the dream of God’s mind, before creation, there is a desire written into the heart of man, which is “the desire of finding a being like himself”. Man, if he is to be fulfilled, must find his “second self”. This is the anthropological quest, a quest not written into the remainder of God’s creation. This is what distinguishes ‘man’ from the remainder of creation. Commentators to date do not appear to have appreciated this aspect of St John Paul’s teaching.

The two *in the beginning* are of ‘one body’ or of one “somatic structure” The “homogeneity” of the first couple

Pages 43,44

While St John Paul mentions on page 44 that the description of Eve being **made “with the rib” that God-Yahweh had taken from the man** is an **archaic, metaphorical and figurative way of expressing the thought**, he does, however, significantly continue to state (with emphasis added) that in the description found in Genesis **we can establish that it is a question here of homogeneity** [i.e. being of the same flesh and blood] of the whole being of both. **This homogeneity concerns above all the body, the somatic structure.** It is also confirmed by the man’s first words to the woman who has been created: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gn 2:23).

Comment: Although St John Paul reads the account in Genesis ‘figuratively’ it must be stated however that he believes in (a) the homogeneity of the first couple and (b) the (historical) Fall from that state of original innocence and love *in the beginning*. For, in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), which St John Paul approved for all the faithful, it clearly states that **our first parents really existed and that original sin is transmitted to every person as a consequence of their fall into sin.** The Catechism teaches: “The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man. **Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents**” (CCC 390). St John Paul believes that within the ‘myth’ there is a “deeper content” which can be discovered under the “layer of the ancient narrative”. He writes on page 43: **“Following the contemporary philosophy of religion and that of language, it can be said that the language in question is a mythical one. In this case, the term “myth” does not designate a fabulous content** [i.e. it is

not a ‘fable’], **but merely an archaic way of expressing a deeper content. Without any difficulty we discover that content under the layer of the ancient narrative.”**

In St John Paul’s mind Adam is of ‘one body’ with Eve and Eve is ‘one body’ with Adam (i.e. the homogeneity of the first couple). The whole of marriage for St John Paul rests on this point and in the sacrament of marriage (which St John Paul will later develop), in the sacredness of the conjugal act, when the couple re-enact or bring about what God had intended in the beginning for our first parents who were ‘not two’ but ‘one body’ in the Garden of Eden. “And so what God has united let no man put asunder”.



Having a “second self” reveals Man as different from other “living beings” (animals were not created with a desire for finding a “second self”, this ‘spousal desire’ was given to man alone)

Pages 44,45

How the real creation of Eve from Adam took place, St John Paul does not venture to speculate, **only to point out that the groom and bride in God’s original innocence were truly of ‘one body’ or one somatic structure. In this vital sense ‘man’ is distinguished from other “living beings (animalia)”. The joy of finding and being in communion with a “second self” (something which St John Paul will later develop) answers the problem of original solitude and reveals the vocation of man as different from all “living beings (animalia)”. Man, not animal, is called to exist in a nuptial relationship as male and female. St John Paul writes (p. 44): It [i.e. the creation of the “second self” in Genesis 2] is also personal and equally referred to the situation of original solitude, that is, to the whole process of the stabilization of human identity in relation to living beings (animalia) as a whole, since it is the process of man’s ‘differentiation’ from this environment. In this way [i.e. of being with a second self], the circle of the solitude of the man-person is broken, because the first ‘man’ awakens from his sleep as “male and female”. On page 45 he writes: Joy in the other human being, in the second “self” dominates the words spoken by the man on seeing the woman.....in his original solitude**

man acquires a personal consciousness in the process of distinction from all living beings (*animalia*). St John Paul later develops (see pp. 282-283) the distinction he notes above in the desire to become ‘one flesh’ of man from that of animals. He writes: **The modern mentality is accustomed to thinking and speaking about the sexual instinct, transferring onto the level of human reality what is proper to the world of living beings of animals. Now deep reflection on the concise text of the first and second chapters of Genesis permits us to establish with certainty and conviction that right from the beginning a very clear and univocal boundary is laid down in the Bible between the world of animals (*animalia*) and the man created in the image and likeness of God.....Therefore, it is not at all appropriate and adequate to apply to man this substantially naturalistic category that is contained in the concept and in the expression of sexual instinct.**



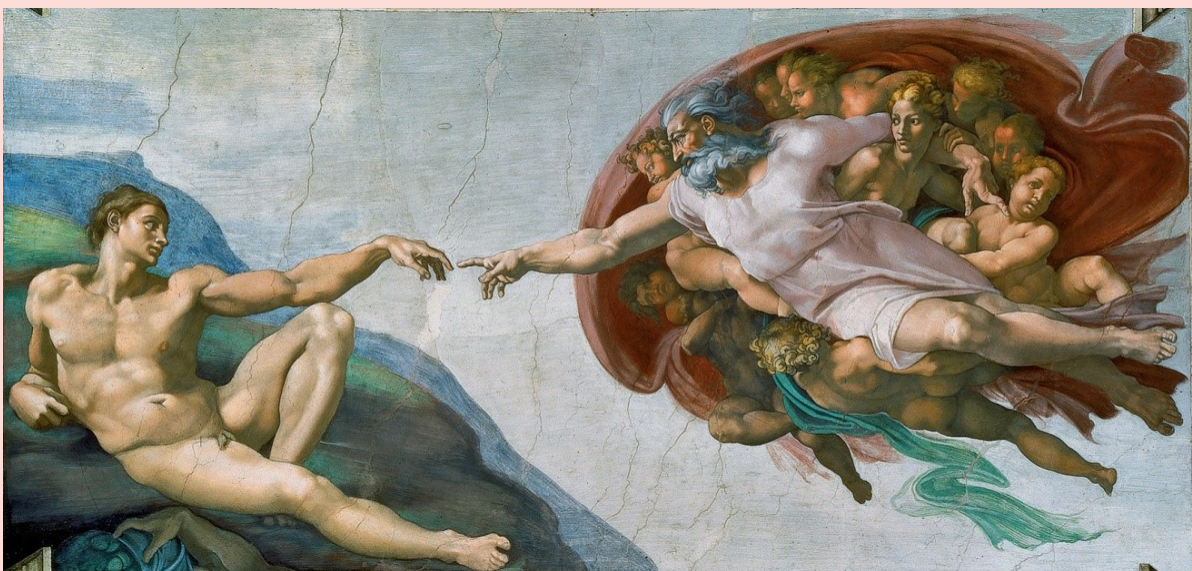
Being a “communion of persons” (i.e. the male and female *in the beginning* “with the blessing of fertility”) images the Blessed Trinity

Pages 46,47

St John Paul states on page 46 (emphasis added) that the second chapter of Genesis **agrees with the content of the first narrative** [in Genesis 1, where it states that man was created in the image of God] when it says that man and woman (male and female), **became the image and likeness of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons which man and woman form right from the beginning.....** Man becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude **as in the moment of communion...** Right “from the beginning”, he is not only an image in which the solitude of a person who rules the world is reflected, but also, and essentially, an image of an inscrutable divine communion of persons. In this way, the second narrative could also be a preparation for understanding the Trinitarian concept of “the image of God”, even if the latter appears only in the first narrative. **Obviously,**

this is not without significance for the theology of the body. Perhaps it [i.e. being a communion of persons in Genesis 2] **even constitutes the deepest theological aspect of all that can be said about man.** In the mystery of creation...man was endowed with a deep unity between what is, humanly and through the body, male in him and what is, equally and through the body, female in him. On all this **the blessing of fertility** descended, linked with human procreation. In reference to the above, St John Paul earlier wrote on page 48, **In this way the second narrative [i.e. Genesis 2] could also be a preparation for understanding the Trinitarian concept of the “image of God”,** even if the latter [i.e. the image of God] **appears only in the first narrative** [i.e. in Genesis 1].

Comment: Again, here, St John Paul concludes that **from the very beginning, from the first moment of creation, man was created (and existed as) male and female in a communion of persons.** For he writes that “Man becomes the image of God [which was in the very beginning, the first moment of creation] not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion”. So, from the first moment of creation man – in a communion of persons - was in the image of God. St John Paul does not stop there but adds something more concerning this ‘communion of persons’, something which God had originally intended for the first couple in the beginning and presumably then for every couple. St John Paul writes that not only was ‘man’ destined from the beginning to be revealed as ‘male and female’, what might be described as **‘two in a communion of persons’**, for he adds “on all this the blessing of fertility descended, linked with human procreation”. To the first couple, then St John Paul writes - in the blessing of fertility - a third was to be born. This first communion of persons was ultimately to be revealed, not as two therefore, but as **‘three in a communion of persons’**. In this way there was graced or gifted into human nature what St John Paul describes as “a preparation for understanding the Trinitarian concept of [man in] the “image of God”.” It is as if from the very beginning of creation, the first man, if he was to image God perfectly, was called to have been a communion of three persons (and not two), Adam and his fruitful or expectant bride. Eve, as a virgin, was called to be with child. This leads St John Paul into the next section.



Notice in Michelangelo's painting how Eve is already in the mind of God (in the left hand of God, inside the artist's depiction of 'God's brain') before Adam was created

The Virginal yet Fruitful relationship of Male and Female *in the beginning* is the Model of Communion for all Men and Women

Pages 49,50

St John Paul writes on page 49 (emphasis added); **Uniting with each other (in the conjugal act) so closely as to become ‘one flesh’, man and woman rediscover, so to speak, every time and in a special way, the mystery of creation.** They return in this way to that union in humanity (‘bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’ [Gn 2:23])..... This means reliving, in a sense, **the original virginal value of man** [emphasis added], **which emerges from his solitude before God and in the midst of the world.** St John Paul continues to state that this **original virginal but nuptial state *in the beginning*** is the model for all subsequent male-female relationships in humanity. He writes on page 50 (emphasis added): **Formed in the image of God, also in as much as they form a true communion of persons, the first man and the first woman must constitute the beginning and the model of that communion for all men and women, who, in any period, are united so intimately so as to become one flesh.....it proves that in every conjugal union of man and woman, the same original consciousness of the unifying significance of the body in its masculinity and femininity is discovered again.**

Comment: Most significantly here, St John Paul states that every time a man and woman unite in the conjugal act (and become fruitful) they **relive the mystery of creation *in the beginning*** when man “emerges from his [original and virginal] solitude before God in the midst of the world” as male and female. When he states that man (i.e. ‘the first man and the first woman’) “emerges from his solitude before God” as male and female, St John Paul indicates that the first couple were **already united as one before they emerged as male and female.** They did not later unite together as one body for the first time, for they were already united as one, having been created that way by God in the beginning. This first union of the two before the conjugal act, significantly, **was a union in the virginal state (that is outside the conjugal act)**, a very important point in St John Paul’s writings that commentators have either overlooked or have missed (in this regard Christopher West’s interpretation as outlined in his *Theology of the Body Explained* on p. 116, has been considered). This destined virginal union is beautifully depicted in Michelangelo’s painting in the Sistine Chapel *where* Eve (see God the Father’s left hand in the painting) is **already in the mind of God for Adam before Adam was created.** This dignified mystery of creation is reserved for man alone (i.e. it is not a graced feature in the animal realm) who has been created in the image of God. The **nuptial** state of man and woman *in the beginning*, was called to be **virginal.** Although not mentioned here Mary, the Mother of Jesus, virginal wife of Joseph whom the Church has called the ‘new Eve’, comes to mind as the perfect exemplar of this model. This **virginal yet nuptial state** is developed by St John Paul later in the *Theology of the Body*.

This First Covenant was, however, broken with the consequent experience of the Shame of Original Nakedness. A New Moment in History appears.

Pages 53,54

St John Paul writes (emphasis added) on page 53 **“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons” (Gn 3:7).** **The adverb “then” indicates a new moment and a new situation**

following the breaking of the first covenant... This new moment or situation also implies a new content and a new quality of experience of the body, so that it can no longer be said “They were naked but were not ashamed”.....In the experience of shame the human being experiences fear with regard to his ‘second self’.... This [fear] is substantially fear for one’s own “self”. The experience of “shame” as a consequence of the loss of that state of original innocence is the lot of the human person. This new state now defines him. St John Paul continues this subtle insight into human nature: **With shame the human being manifests almost instinctively the need of affirmation and acceptance of this ‘self’, according to its rightful value. He experiences it at the same time both within himself, and externally, before the ‘other’.**

Comment: Two points can be made here: (1) The **first and original nuptial union** of male and female, according to St John Paul, **was designed and intended by God in the virginal state** (2) The **second and “new moment”** of experience with respect to the nuptial union of the male and female is the present bodily experience of all humanity, a fallen state which, according to St John Paul, is ultimately **a state of fear in each person for his/her “second self”**, a state in need of “affirmation”. St John Paul later develops this new state when he describes the sexual union of man and woman in marriage and procreation. Again, this change of experience in the body, this nuptial shame” and “fear for his second self” appears not to have been given sufficient appreciation by commentators of the TOB to date.

**St John Paul asks: “What fullness of conscience and experience” in the body did the original state of being naked and unashamed correspond to?
The original state involved “the fullness of interpersonal communion”**

Pages 55,56,57

In his analysis of the Genesis text, where we are told the first couple were naked and unashamed, St John Paul states on page 55 that this original state of innocence was not a form of **primitivization** of the **non-presence of shame** (i.e. it was not some lack of development of shame in an evolutionary sense). Rather, the words in Genesis describing the state of original innocence, **serve to indicate a particular fullness of consciousness and experience...[they] indicate a full understanding of the meaning of the body bound up with the fact that they were naked.** From the moment of their creation the first couple had a fully mature consciousness. St John Paul continues on page 56: **We must ask ourselves what does the meaning of the original nakedness [and not being ashamed] which Genesis 2:25 speaks of correspond to?** St John Paul answers this when he states on pages 56 and 57: **However, it is not possible to determine the meaning of original nakedness considering only man’s participation in exterior perception of the world. It is not possible to establish it without going into the depths of man...to seek there the original innocence of knowing. The dimension of human interiority is necessary to explain and measure that particular fullness of interpersonal communion, thanks to which man and woman were naked and not ashamed...In this way the human body acquires a completely new meaning, which cannot be placed on the plane of the remaining “external” perception of the world. It expresses the person in his ontological and existential concreteness, which is something more than the individual. Therefore the body expresses the personal human “self”, which derives its exterior perception from within...it enables man and woman, right from the beginning, to communicate with each other according to that *communio personarum* willed by the Creator precisely for them....through which the personal intimacy of mutual**

communication in all its radical simplicity and purity is constituted. To this fullness of exterior perception, expressed by means of physical nakedness, there corresponds the interior fullness of man's vision in God, that is, according to the measure of the "image of God".

Comment: Although the first couple were created in a state of original innocence, they had, according to St John Paul, had a fully mature consciousness; they were fully human. This original state of innocence was, therefore, not a form of "primitivization" of the "non-presence of shame". Coupled with the natural feelings and emotions they experienced arising from their "external perception of the world", there was also - and more importantly - according to St John Paul's analysis of "original nakedness", the "original innocence of knowing", what might be described as an **'inward yearning deep within the body' for that form of interpersonal communion which God had made them for in the beginning'**, having been created in the **"image of God"**. According to St John Paul, "it is not possible to determine the meaning of original nakedness", without entering **internally** "into the depths of man...to seek there the original innocence of knowing". He writes that this description (in Genesis 2) of man in the beginning being created in the image of God, reveals an earlier state of "the body [which] allows man and woman to communicate with each other according to that *communio personarum* willed by the Creator". He then adds: "Only this dimension enables us to rightly understand the meaning of original nakedness" [and of not being ashamed].

The Nuptial meaning of the Body is revealed both in Marriage and in Celibacy

Page 66



The Married and Celibate Person both exist in the Nuptial State

St John Paul again underlines the significance of the nuptial character of the body inherent in each human being by stating on page 66 (with emphasis added) that man **in the whole perspective of his own history** [i.e. the history of mankind after original sin], **will not fail to confer a nuptial meaning on his own body**. He further states on page 66 **Reading them** [i.e. the first pages of Genesis] **we are convinced of the fact that the awareness of the meaning of the body that is derived from them - in particular its nuptial meaning - is the fundamental element of human existence in the world**. But, he continues, this nuptial truth is not reserved for married couples alone for he, significantly, goes on to state (with emphasis added) that **Christ revealed to man and woman, over and above the vocation to marriage, another vocation - namely, that of renouncing marriage, in view of the kingdom of heaven**. With this vocation,

he [i.e. Christ] highlighted **the same truth** about the human person [i.e. the nuptial meaning of the body]. If a man or a woman is capable of making a gift of himself for the kingdom of heaven, this proves in its turn (and perhaps even more) that there is the freedom of the gift in the human body. It means that this body possesses **a full nuptial meaning**.

Comment: Although not mentioned here by St John Paul, this may explain why so many married husbands in the early Church renounced the ‘right of marriage’ (i.e. they renounced conjugal intercourse with their wives) to live, with their respective wives, what is known as the ‘Lex Continentiae’ - the law of continence in marriage. They became priests, expressing the “full nuptial meaning” of the body by raising the status of their ‘marriage’ to that of the virginal state. In his “Letter to Pammachius” (Letter XLVIII), St Jerome (early 5th cent.) clearly indicates this when he categorizes ‘marriage’ according to three different grades, the highest of which is marriage in the virginal state (the second is widowhood and the third is the married state). In this Letter, St Jerome reprimands Jovinian who suggested that the three nuptial states were of equal merit in the eyes of God.

All humanity (and not only married couples) is created ‘male and female’.

To be human is to exist in a nuptial relationship.

This nuptial truth is “deeply rooted in the consciousness of humanity”.

Pages 69,74

Pope John Paul then seeks, on page 69, as he states himself, to **reconstruct the peculiarity of original innocence enclosed within the mutual experience of the body and its nuptial meaning according to Genesis 2:23-25**. The situation described here reveals the beatifying experience of the meaning of the body. He continues: **Within the mystery of creation, man attains this** [i.e. this reconstruction of the beginning; this truth concerning the nuptial meaning of the body in its original innocence] **in the complementarity of what is male and female within him**. St John Paul later writes (emphasis added) on page 74 that all humanity is created in this way as male and female: **In the mystery of creation, man and woman were “given” in a special way to each other by the Creator. That was not only in the dimension of that first human couple and of that first communion of persons, but in the whole perspective of the existence of the human family**. The fundamental fact of human existence **at every stage of its history is that God “created them male and female.” He always creates them in this way and they are always such**. Understanding of the fundamental meanings contained in the mystery of creation, such as the nuptial meaning of the body (and of the fundamental conditionings of this meaning), **is important**. Again, it is important to note here that, according to St John Paul, **all of humanity (and not only married couples)** is created according to this original plan in the beginning. An understanding of this fundamental truth of the nuptial meaning of the body, St John Paul states (emphasis added), **is indispensable in order to know who man is and who he should be**, and therefore how he should mold his own activity. It is an essential and important thing for the future of the human ethos. He continues (emphasis added): Genesis 2:24 notes that the two, man and woman, were created for marriage: “Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” In this way a great creative perspective is opened. It is precisely the perspective of man’s existence, which is continually renewed by means of procreation, or, we could say, self-reproduction. **This perspective is deeply rooted in the consciousness of humanity (cf. Gn 2:23) and also in the particular consciousness of the nuptial meaning of the body (Gn 2:25). Before becoming husband and wife (later**

Genesis 4:1 speaks of this in the concrete), the man and the woman emerge from the mystery of creation in the first place as brother and sister in the same humanity.

Comment: Two points are noted: (1) Emphasis should be made here that the **nuptial blessing** of the male and female in the beginning is, **according to St John Paul**, given to **all humanity** – to every male and female (including those who are single and celibate) – and therefore **not just to those who are ‘married’**. (2) Pope John Paul observes that, “before becoming husband and wife” (i.e. in the conjugal act), the first couple were “brother and sister”, for having been being united in the beginning as one body (i.e. Eve came from the side of Adam) they both shared the same flesh and blood. Being brother and sister they both belong to the same family which finds its home in God – the Blessed Trinity. It should be noted also (as was commented upon in an earlier section) that although the first couple had not united in the conjugal act (i.e. “before becoming husband and wife”) they, as was earlier noted by St John Paul, were already united as one, having been created that way by God. This duality of being both husband and wife and brother and sister is an important truth revealed in the Song of Songs which St John Paul explores at great length towards the end on the TOB. He does this in order to further develop and reconstruct the meaning of the nuptial state of the body as it existed *in the beginning* and as will be revealed in the resurrection.

The Body in its Nuptial State (i.e. the body of the male and female before sin entered the world) makes visible the invisibility of God

Page 76

St John Paul says that man (i.e. man, who is male and female in ‘his’ nuptial state of innocence in the beginning) **brings into the world his likeness to God**. He states: **A reflection of this likeness [i.e. the likeness to God], is also the primordial awareness of the nuptial meaning of the body, pervaded by the mystery of original innocence.....this transmits effectively in the visible world the invisible mystery hidden in God from time immemorial**. St John Paul states that, **The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible, what is invisible, the spiritual and the divine**.

An appreciation of this Nuptial State *in the beginning* is, according to St John Paul, so important for Society today

Pages 87,89

Among the answers that Christ would give, St John Paul writes, **to the people of our time and to their questions the one he gave to the Pharisees [i.e. when Jesus spoke on the nature and indissolubility of marriage *in the beginning*], would still be fundamental**. **Answering those questions, Christ would refer above all to the “beginning”**. St John Paul continues (emphasis added): **Those who seek the accomplishment of their own human and Christian vocation in marriage are called, first of all, to make this theology of the body, whose beginning we find in the first chapters of Genesis, the content of their life and behavior. How indispensable is a thorough knowledge of the meaning of the body, in its masculinity and femininity, along the way of this vocation**. St John Paul then adds that **Christ orders man**, male and female, to return to *this beginning* to discover the path along which God leads him.

Comment: These words of St John Paul are very encouraging for all those who devote time to this particular theme in Scripture. We must discover, as St John Paul states “this theology of the body” **in the beginning**, this hidden truth concerning marital love as **God intended in the beginning**, and make this the “content of their [our] life and behavior”. Linked with this search for the truth of marital love as designed by God in the beginning, could we mention here our own Bible Group’s study on the early chapters of Genesis entitled “Marriage in the Early Chapters of Genesis” which has recently been uploaded onto YouTube in a six-part series. The findings of this study (as presented in the six-part series) are entirely compatible with St John Paul’s TOB.

Blessed are the Pure in Heart - Catechesis on the Sermon on the Mount

Pages 103-191

In a large section of the TOB entitled “Blessed are the Pure in Heart” (pages 103-191), St John Paul presents a catechesis on the Sermon of the Mount (chapters 5-7 of St Matthew’s Gospel). He explains how man’s original broken nuptial relationship (i.e. the loss of innocence suffered by our first parents and by subsequent humanity) can be recovered by turning to the redeeming love of Christ. St John Paul explains that man can recover this loss of the nuptial state of his body (as male and female) by dominating the lust now existing in his body with “purity of heart”. He explains that the grace of Christ’s redeeming act of love on the Cross has been given to us and that this redeeming gift will empower us to experience “life according to the Spirit”. We experience the “freedom from which Christ has set us free”, not the freedom to indulge the flesh (which is an “enslavement to disorderly passions”), but, the control of our bodies “in holiness and reverence”. By this acting out of “the purity of heart”, the original nuptial meaning of the body (as male and female) is recovered. For a complete analysis of the above section of the TOB we would recommend Christopher West’s commentary on the Theology of the Body.

We will exist in our resurrected bodies as ‘male and female’ in the Resurrection

Pages 238,239

In this second part of his work under the title “Life according to the Spirit”, St John Paul considers – among other things - how the body (of the faithful departed) will exist in the resurrection based on Christ’s words about *the beginning*. He states that the body will exist **in a new state of human life itself**. He affirms that our resurrected bodies will **keep their masculine or feminine peculiarity**. He continues on page 239 (emphasis added): **The dimension of masculinity and femininity – that is being male and female in the body – will again be constituted** together with the resurrection of the body in “that age”. St John Paul asks: Is it possible to say something more detailed on this subject? He answers: beyond all doubt. Christ’s words.....authorize us to do so. He goes on to state that there will be **a spiritualization of man according to a different dimension from that of earthly life and even different from that of the beginning itself**. However, St John Paul states that **it is not a question here of transforming man’s nature into that of the angels, that is, a purely spiritual one.....man will keep his own human psychosomatic nature**. If it were otherwise, it would be meaningless to speak of the resurrection.

The “spiritualization” of the body in the Resurrection The “divinization” of man in the Resurrection according to God’s Trinitarian mystery

Pages 241,242,243,245

St John Paul teaches that, with respect to the state of man in the resurrection, there will be a completeness to the process of the **spiritualization of man** (the process of the spiritualization of man begins at the moment of our baptism and, during our lives on earth, the life of the spirit is intensifying within us). In heaven, St John Paul teaches, the body will be permeated in full by the spirit, where it will be transformed into that state of ‘perfection’ which sees it ‘divinized’. This divinization of humanity will cause, St John Paul states “a new formation of the whole personal subjectivity of man in accordance with union with God in his Trinitarian mystery and of intimacy with him in the perfect communion of persons”. St John Paul writes on pages 241 and 242 (emphasis added): **In the resurrection the body will return to perfect unity and harmony with the spirit. Man will no longer experience the opposition between what is spiritual and what is physical in him. Spiritualization means not only that the spirit will dominate the body, but, I would say, that it will fully permeate the body, and that the forces of the spirit will permeate the energies of the body.....**It is therefore a perfect spiritualization, in which the possibility that “another law is at war with the law of the ...mind” (cf Rom 7:23) is completely eliminated. This state which, as is evident, is differentiated essentially (and not only with regard to degree) from what we experience in earthly life, does not signify any disincarnation of the body nor, consequently, a dehumanization of man....The resurrection will consist in **the perfect participation of all that is physical in man in what is spiritual in him**. At the same time it will consist in the perfect realization of what is personal in man.....the state of man in the other world will not only be a state of perfect spiritualization, but also of **a fundamental divinization of his humanity.....** Participation in divine nature will mean that the human spirit will arrive at such fullness which previously had been absolutely inaccessible to it. This new spiritualization will therefore be the fruit of grace, that is, of the communication of God in his very divinity, not only to man’s soul but **to his whole psychosomatic subjectivity....** This is because that divinization is to be understood not only as an interior state of man capable of seeing God face to face.... **but also as a new formation of the whole personal subjectivity of man in accordance with union with God in his Trinitarian mystery and of intimacy with him in the perfect communion of persons. This intimacy – with all its subjective intensity – will not absorb man’s personal subjectivity but rather will make it stand out to an incomparably greater and fuller extent** (i.e. man, male and female, will not relate solely to God in heaven but also, in God, will inter-relate with one another in a communion of persons who share in the nuptial mystery). This significant point appears to have been missed out on, or overlooked, by commentaries on the TOB to date.

St John Paul follows by stating: (1) that man, “who from the beginning bears within himself the image and likeness of God”, will participate in the resurrection in the divinization of God and (2) this divinization of man will reveal “the definitive fulfilment of the nuptial meaning of the body in heaven”. St John Paul writes (emphasis added): **When Christ spoke of the resurrection, he proved at the same time that the human body will also take part, in its way, in the eschatological experience of truth and love, united with the vision of God face to face. When Christ said that those who take part in the future resurrection “neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Mk 12:25), his words – as has already been pointed out – not only affirmed the end of earthly history, bound up with marriage and procreation, but they also seemed to**

reveal the new meaning of the body... This eschatological experience of the living God will not only concentrate in itself all man's spiritual energies, but, at the same time, it will reveal to him, in a deep and experiential way, the self-communication of God to the whole of creation and, in particular, to man. **This is the most personal self-giving by God, in his very divinity, to man: to that being who, from the beginning, bears within himself the image and likeness of God.....** In this spiritualization and divinization in which man will participate in the resurrection, we discover – in an eschatological dimension – **the same characteristics that qualified the nuptial meaning of the body.** We discover them in the meeting with the mystery of the living God, which is revealed through the vision of him face to face. St. John Paul later again in the same section states (emphasis added): We must think of the reality of the other world in the categories of the rediscovery of a new, perfect subjectivity of everyone and at the same time **of the rediscovery of a new, perfect intersubjectivity of all.** In this way, this reality signifies the real and definitive fulfillment of human subjectivity, and on this basis, **the definitive fulfillment of the nuptial meaning of the body.** The complete concentration of created subjectivity, redeemed and glorified, on God himself **will not take man away from this fulfillment, in fact—on the contrary—it will introduce him into it and consolidate him in it.** One can say, finally, that in this way eschatological reality will become the source of the **perfect realization of the trinitarian order in the created world of persons.**

Comment: Pope John Paul seems to indicate here that the blessed joy of the saints in heaven with all its intensity will not be absorbed by communion with God alone, but through the vision of God face to face, will necessarily overflow to include with it those other relationships formed on earth but even to “a far more perfect extent than in earthly life” (p.244). Just as God is One and a Communion of Persons, so man - in the light of God in the resurrection - will also be a communion of persons. Of paramount consideration here, of course, here is the nuptial relationship of man and woman. In the vision of God face to face in his Trinitarian communion, man (male and female) will, as St John Paul writes, “not lose his subjective intensity” but “rather will make it stand out to an incomparably greater and fuller extent”. He, according to St John Paul, will discover this same true nuptial meaning of his own body reflected in the Trinitarian mystery. Again, commentaries on the TOB fail to appreciate St John Paul's teaching in this regard, a teaching consistently presented throughout the TOB with respect to the nuptial state of the body in the resurrection.



The Holy Spirit has a nuptial design for every couple in Heaven

**In the Resurrection, Marriage (i.e. the conjugal act)
gives way to “the virginal meaning of being male and female”**

Pages 242, 243, 244

On p. 242, Saint John Paul - recalling Christ's response to the question posed by the Sadducees as to whom the woman with seven husbands will be married to in the resurrection – quotes Christ's words stating that those in the resurrection “neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25). Clarifying the meaning of these words, St John Paul follows in the same passage by stating (emphasis added): **Christ's words not only affirmed the end of earthly history bound up with marriage and procreation, but they also seemed to reveal the new meaning of the body.** The question that naturally follows, then, is: “What is this new meaning of the body that St John Paul alludes to?” What state does this new meaning of the body correspond to in the resurrection? How will males and females relate to each other in heaven? St John Paul proposes a response when on page 242 he writes (emphasis added): **Is it possible, in this case, at the level of biblical eschatology, to think of the discovery of the nuptial meaning of the body, above all as the virginal meaning of being male and female as regards the body?**

Developing this same theme he writes (on p. 244) - with even greater emphasis - that **those who participate in the future world, that is, in perfect communion with the living God will enjoy a perfectly mature subjectivity. In this perfect subjectivity, while keeping masculinity and femininity in their risen, glorious body, “they neither marry nor are given in marriage”.** St John Paul further states on page 244: **In this mutual gift of himself by man, a gift which will become completely and definitively beatifying, as a response worthy of a personal subject to God's gift of Himself, virginity or rather the virginal state of the body, will be totally manifested as the eschatological fulfillment of the nuptial meaning of the body.** Again, on page 244, he states, **this concentration of knowledge (vision) and love on God himself, a concentration that cannot be other than full participation in the interior life of God, that is, in the very Trinitarian reality – will be at the same time the discovery, in God, of the whole “world” of relations constitutive of his perennial order.** This concentration will be above all man's rediscovery of himself not only in the depth of his own person but also in that union which is proper to the world of persons in their psychosomatic constitution.

Comment: This is certainly among St John Paul's most radical and profound teachings with respect to the resurrection experience of the body in heaven. It seems clear, from the above passage read in light of his entire work – that St John Paul teaches that all of us (whether we are married, single or professing vows of celibacy) will experience in the body **a nuptial communion in the virginal state**, (i.e. not ‘marriage’ according to the earthly form) with our respective spouse and in “the whole world of relations”, in accordance with that life in the Blessed Trinity. Again, this key aspect of the TOB appears to have been overlooked by commentaries to date.



The virginal meaning of the body in the resurrection is anticipated by the virginal witness of love lived by Mary and Joseph

Pages 268,269

This nuptial meaning of the body, that is of the male and female, the husband and wife living in the virginal state, is further developed by St John Paul under a section entitled “Continence for the sake of the Kingdom” (p’s 267-269), where he applies it to Mary and Joseph or what he terms the “Nazareth conditions of the pact of Mary and Joseph” (p.269). St John Paul writes: **The marriage of Mary and Joseph (in which the Church honours Joseph as Mary’s spouse, and Mary as his spouse), conceals within itself, at the same time, the mystery of that perfect communion of the persons, of the man and woman in the conjugal pact, and also the mystery of that singular continence for the kingdom of heaven [emphasis added]. This continence served, in the history of salvation, the most perfect fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, in a certain sense it was the absolute fullness of that spiritual fruitfulness, since precisely in the Nazareth conditions of the pact of Mary and Joseph in marriage and continence [emphasis added], the gift of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word was realized. The Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, was conceived and born as man from the Virgin Mary.**

Comment: In the above paragraph Pope John Paul states that God’s gift of Himself to us (in his Trinitarian communion) – “the most perfect fullness of the Holy Spirit” – is reflected in the lives of Mary and Joseph, in the virginal and nuptial witness of their love. **It was as St John Paul states in the “Nazareth pact...in marriage and continence” that Jesus was born. Here, we have what might be termed a true icon, in human nature, of the Blessed Trinity. In the resurrection where Mary and Joseph continue to live ‘as husband and wife’ and, where we hope to follow, man will not simply live on his own, as male or female in the single state, but will, like Mary and Joseph, live in a nuptial communion of love which is both virginal and fruitful. In the virginal and fruitful lives of Mary and Joseph, whom the**

Church has always referred to as husband and wife, the true nuptial meaning of the body in heaven is given a prophetic foretaste and a concrete application of its nuptial destiny.

St John Paul states that we can (partially) construct the revelation of the body both (a) as it was *in the beginning* and (b) as it will be in the Resurrection

Pages 245,248

Although we might be tempted to think that (a) what actually happened in the beginning and (b) what lies ahead in the resurrection, is beyond our comprehension, St John Paul states that “these two extensions of the sphere of the experience of the body [i.e. **the experience of the body both (a) *in the beginning* and (b) in the Resurrection**] are not completely beyond our understanding”. We can, he believes, on the basis of what is revealed in Scripture, make a limited - if not significant – “reconstruction”. This reconstruction is key to his whole study. St John Paul writes on page 245 (emphasis added): **The words with which Christ referred to the future resurrection—words confirmed in a singular way by his own resurrection—complete what in the present reflections we are accustomed to call the revelation of the body. This revelation penetrates in a way into the heart of the reality which we are experiencing. This reality is above all man, his body, the body of historical man. At the same time, **this revelation enables us to go beyond the sphere of this experience in two directions—in the first place, in the direction of that beginning which Christ referred to in his conversation with the Pharisees regarding the indissolubility of marriage (cf. Mt 19:3-9); in the second place, in the direction of the other world**, to which the Master drew the attention of his listeners in the presence of the Sadducees, who “say that there is no resurrection” (Mt 22:23). These two extensions of the sphere of the experience of the body (if we may say so) are **not completely beyond the reach of our (obviously theological) understanding of the body**. What the human body is in the sphere of man’s historical experience is not completely cut off from those two dimensions of his existence, which are revealed through Christ’s words. It is clear that here it is a question not so much of the body in the abstract, but of man who is at once spiritual and physical. Continuing in the two directions indicated by Christ’s words, and linking up again with the experience of the body in the dimension of our earthly existence (therefore in the historical dimension), **we can make a certain theological reconstruction. This is a reconstruction of what might have been the experience of the body on the basis of man’s revealed beginning** [i.e. the state of innocence of the body in the beginning], **and also of what it will be in the dimension of the other world** [i.e. the resurrection]. The possibility of this reconstruction, which extends our experience of man-body, indicates, at least indirectly, the consistency of man’s theological image in these three dimensions, which together contribute to the constitution of the theology of the body.**

St. John Paul, later in the same section, asks (with emphasis added): **However, is it not possible to affirm that man bears, in a way, these two dimensions in the depth of the experience of his own being**, or rather that he is somehow on his way to them as to dimensions that fully justify the meaning of his being a body, that is, of his being a carnal man? And again he states (emphasis added): **The experience of mankind, and especially the experience of the body, enable the listener to unite with those words [i.e. Christ’s words to the Sadducees concerning marriage in the resurrection] the image of his new existence in the “future world,” for which earthly experience supplies the substratum and the base. An adequate theological reconstruction is possible.** Again on page 248, St John Paul writes (emphasis added): **On the**

basis of man's experiences and knowledge in his temporal life, that is, in this world, it is all too clear that it is difficult to construct a fully adequate image of the future world. However, at the same time there is no doubt that, with the help of Christ's words [i.e. Christ's words to the Sadducees concerning marriage and life in the resurrection, Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:34-35] **a certain approximation to this image is possible and attainable....Christ's words reported in the synoptic Gospels (cf Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20: 34-35) have a decisive meaning not only as regards the words of Genesis (which Christ referred to on another occasion), but also in what concerns the entire Bible.** These words enable us, in a certain sense, to read again, that is in depth, **the whole revealed meaning of the body**, the meaning of being a man, that is, a person incarnated, **of being a male or female as regards the body.**



The Wedding Feast of Heaven – dressed in white robes – is of a higher order than that known on earth

Comment: St John Paul states in the above passage that we can (partially) construct the experience of that state of the body which, God-willing, lies ahead for each of us in the resurrection (“and which might have been the experience of the body....[in] man's revealed beginning”). St John Paul indicates that the beauty and joy of heaven is **now** open to us but we must seek to discover it. It was for this reason that St John Paul went to such lengths in the TOB to help us appreciate what lies ahead for us in the resurrection, a joy we must commit ourselves to lest we are overcome by the lures and worries of today's world. St John Paul says that the words of Scripture referred to in the above two passages (Mt 19:3-9 and Mt 22: 30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:34-35, when Jesus was questioned addressed the question of marriage in the beginning and in the afterlife) have a decisive meaning for what concerns the entire bible. Hence, the importance of clearly presenting what he wrote, lest we lose what appears to be a prophetic teaching for our own times.

**St John Paul's "reconstruction" on the "revelation of the body"
both (a) *in the beginning* and (b) in the Resurrection.
Is this the central point of the "Theology of the Body"?**

Pages 246,247,248



Eve, in the Mind of God for Adam (left hand) Christ and His Bride (the Church) in Heaven

We have now come to what we believe is the central point of the TOB, namely St John Paul's vision of the nuptial state of the body in the Resurrection, the hope of mankind as professed in the Creed **"I believe in the resurrection of the dead"**.

In Christ's response to the Sadducees concerning marriage (or, what might be stated better, 'the nuptial state of the body') in the resurrection (see Mt 22:23-33; Mk 12:18-27; Lk 20:27-40), St John Paul makes some very important observations. He states that man, who "will always be the same" in heaven, will be male and female, and although Jesus said that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage", St John Paul adds that Jesus **"did not state that this man of the future world will no longer be male and female as he was from the beginning"**. In respect of this future nuptial state, St John Paul writes on pages 246 and 247 (emphasis added):

The words in which Christ referred to the future resurrection – words confirmed in an extraordinary way by his own resurrection – complete what we are accustomed to call in these reflections **the revelation of the body**....The experience of mankind, and especially the experience of the body, enable the listener to unite with those words **the image of his new existence in the "future world"**, for which earthly experience supplies the substratum and the base. **An adequate theological reconstruction is possible**. As regards content, this image corresponds to the article of our profession of faith: **"I believe in the resurrection of the dead"**. The awareness that a connection exists between earthly experience and the whole dimension of the biblical beginning of man in the world greatly contributes to the construction of this image. If at the beginning God "created them male and female" (Gn 1:27); if in this duality concerning the body he envisaged also such a unity that "they become one flesh" (Gn 2:24); if he linked this unity with the blessing of fertility, that is, of procreation (cf Gn 1:29); if speaking before the Sadducees about the future resurrection, Christ explained that "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage," then it is clear that [in the resurrection] it is a question here of a development of the truth about man himself. Christ

indicated his identity, although this identity is realized in eschatological experience in a different way from the experience of the beginning itself and of all history. **Yet man will always be the same, such as he came from the hands of his Creator and Father.** Christ said: **“They neither marry nor are given in marriage.” But he did not state that this man of the future world will no longer be male and female as he was from the beginning.** It is clear therefore that, as regards the body, the meaning of being male and female in the future world must be sought outside marriage and procreation. **But there is no reason to seek it outside that which (independently of the blessing of procreation) derives from the mystery of creation** and which subsequently forms the deepest structure of man’s history on earth, since the mystery of redemption has deeply penetrated this history.

On pages 247 and 248, St John Paul re-states what appears to be his main point throughout the TOB, which is that the nuptial gift which God engraved in the body of man *in the beginning* (of being one and yet, at the same time, male and female in a communion of persons) will, on account of the redemption won by Christ, grace the body of man (male and female) in the resurrection. This original state, in which man was in the image and likeness of God (before marriage and procreation), is a foretaste of the nuptial state which God has reserved for the saints in the resurrection. This correspondence between the glorified state of the body in the future and the original intention for the body “from the beginning” is referred in the passage below: “The glorification of the body, as the eschatological fruit of its divinizing spiritualization, will reveal the definitive value of what was to be from the beginning a distinctive sign of the created person in the visible world.” St John Paul writes on pages 247 and 248 (emphasis added):

Therefore, **in his original situation man is alone and at the same time he becomes male and female - unity of the two.** In his solitude he is revealed to himself as a person, in order to reveal, at the same time, the communion of persons in the unity of the two. In both states the human being is constituted as an image and likeness of God. From the beginning man is also a body among bodies. In the unity of the couple he becomes male and female, discovering the nuptial meaning of his body as a personal subject. **Subsequently,** the meaning of being a body and, in particular, being male and female in the body, is connected with marriage and procreation (that is, with fatherhood and motherhood). **However, the original and fundamental significance of being a body, as well as being, by reason of the body, male and female—that is precisely that nuptial significance—is united with the fact that man is created as a person and called to a life in *communione personarum*.** Marriage and procreation in itself do not determine definitively the original and fundamental meaning of being a body or of being, as a body, male and female. Marriage and procreation merely give a concrete reality to that meaning in the dimensions of history. The resurrection indicates the end of the historical dimension. The words, (“When they rise from the dead they neither marry nor are given in marriage”), enable us also to deduce that the nuptial meaning of the body in the resurrection to the future life **will correspond perfectly both to the fact that man, as a male – female, is a person created in the “image and likeness of God” and to the fact that this image is realized in the communion of persons.** That nuptial meaning of being a body will be realized, therefore, as a meaning that is perfectly personal and communitarian at the same time’.



Although ‘one body’ and ‘one person’ *in the beginning*, the ‘first man’ (‘Hb ‘Adam’) is revealed as male and female – in a communion of persons

Speaking of the body glorified through the resurrection to the future life, **we have in mind man, male-female, in all the truth of his humanity:** man who, together with the eschatological experience of the living God (the face to face vision), will experience precisely this meaning of his own body. **This will be a completely new experience. At the same time it will not be alienated in any way from what man took part in from the beginning** nor from what, in the historical dimension of his existence, constituted in him the source of the tension between spirit and body, concerning mainly the procreative meaning of the body and sex. **The man of the future world will find again in this new experience of his own body precisely the completion of what he bore within himself perennially and historically**, in a certain sense, as a heritage and even more as a duty and objective, as the content of the ethical norm. **The glorification of the body, as the eschatological fruit of its divinizing spiritualization, will reveal the definitive value of what was to be from the beginning a distinctive sign of the created person in the visible world**, as well as a means of mutual communication between persons and a genuine expression of truth and love, for which the *communio personarum* is constituted. That perennial meaning of the human body, to which the existence of every man, weighed down by the heritage of concupiscence, has necessarily brought a series of limitations, struggles and sufferings, **will then be revealed again, and will be revealed in such simplicity and splendour when every participant in the other world will find again in his glorified body the source of the freedom of the gift.** The perfect freedom of the children of God (cf. Rom 8:14) will nourish also with that gift **each of the communions** which will make up the great community of the communion of saints.

Comment: St John Paul re-states here, in this most significant section of the TOB, what he has stated repeatedly, namely: (1) that man in the beginning was created as male and female in a nuptial relationship (2) that after original sin (i.e. after the Fall of the first couple), in earthly historical life, marriage and procreation became the norm and (3) that, in the resurrection, while they “neither marry nor are given in marriage”, man will continue to exist as male and female *in communione personarum* in - as St John Paul proposed earlier in the TOB - **a virginal yet nuptial state**. This “new experience” in the resurrection, although “new”, will “not be alienated in any way” from what “man took part in from the beginning” nor “from what, in the historical dimension of his existence, constituted in him the source of the tension between spirit and body,

concerning mainly the procreative meaning of the body and sex”. The resurrection, rather, will be the completion and perfection of that nuptial state which man possessed in *the beginning* and which characterised his body in earthly history, albeit in the fallen state.



Celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven

Pages 262,263,264,267

In a very important section of his book (pages 262-304) entitled “Virginity or Celibacy for the Sake of the Kingdom”, St John Paul deals with the question of continence or celibacy for the kingdom of heaven. This reflection of St John Paul largely flows from several insights he makes from the conversation Christ had with the Pharisees (a conversation which Jesus had prior to that of his conversation with the Sadducees and which St John Paul links with it) on the subject of the indissolubility of marriage which is recorded in St Matthew’s Gospel 19:1-12. In this regard St John Paul writes on page 262: **Christ did not speak of this problem, of this particular vocation [i.e. continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven], in the immediate context of his conversation with the Sadducees (Mt 22:23-30; Mk 12:18-25; Lk 20:27-36), when there was reference to the resurrection of the body. Instead he had already spoken of it in the context of his conversation with the Pharisees on marriage and on the grounds of indissolubility, as if it were a continuation of that conversation** (emphasis added). St John Paul then goes on to state on page 263 (with emphasis added): **The question of continence for the kingdom of heaven is not set in opposition to marriage, nor is it based on a negative judgment in regard to its importance.....It may be said that the choice of continence for the**

kingdom of heaven is a charismatic orientation toward the eschatological state in which men “neither marry nor are given in marriage”.



However, there is an **essential difference** between man’s state in the resurrection of the body and the voluntary choice of continence for the kingdom of heaven in the earthly life and in the historical state of man fallen and redeemed. The eschatological absence of marriage will be a state, that is, the proper and fundamental mode of existence of human beings, men and women, in their glorified bodies. Continence for the kingdom of heaven, as a fruit of a charismatic choice, is an **exception in respect of that other stage** (i.e. the state of the body in the resurrection), namely that state in which man “from the beginning” became and remains a participant during the course of his whole earthly existence.

On page 264 he states: That such an exception contains within itself an anticipation of the eschatological life without marriage and proper to the “other world” (that is of the final stage of the “kingdom of heaven”) is not directly spoken here by Christ [in his conversation with the Sadducees]. **It is a question indeed, not of continence *in* the kingdom of heaven, but rather of continence *for* the kingdom of heaven.**

On page 267 he states: Continence for the kingdom of heaven is certainly linked to the revelation of the fact that in the kingdom of heaven people “will no longer marry” (Mt 22:30)... The human being, male and female, who, in the earthly situation where people usually marry (cf Lk 20:34), freely chooses continence for the kingdom of heaven, indicates that in that kingdom, which is the other world of the resurrection, people will no longer marry. This is because God will be “everything to everyone” (1 Cor 15:28). **Such a human being, man and woman, indicates the eschatological virginity of the risen man.** In him there will be revealed, I would say, **the absolute and eternal nuptial meaning of the glorified body** in union with God himself through the “face to face” vision of him, and glorified also through the **union of a perfect intersubjectivity.**

Comment: St John Paul states that the vow of celibacy, freely chosen by men and women on earth for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, clearly anticipates a future life in the resurrection where “men do not marry” (i.e. where they do not have conjugal relations). However, this anticipation expressed on earth is an exception to the life of heaven, for in the resurrection there is a nuptial meaning attached to the body of man *as male and female*. This glorified meaning, which will constitute the experience of the vision of God “face to face”, will be expressed by the body in the virginal state which the vow of celibacy points to. Later, and following on from

this section of his study, St John Paul writes how this virginal but nuptial state is perfectly exemplified in the lives of Mary and Joseph of whom Christ is born.



Mary and Joseph – Celibacy and Marriage

Pages 268, 269

St John Paul writes on page 268 (with emphasis added): **Even though Jesus Christ's virginal conception and birth were hidden from men, even though in the eyes of his contemporaries of Nazareth he was regarded as "the carpenter's son" (Mt 13:55), the reality and essential truth of his conception and birth was in itself far removed from what in the Old Testament tradition was exclusively in favour of marriage, and which rendered continence incomprehensible and out of favour.** Therefore, how could continence for the kingdom of heaven be understood, if the expected Messiah was to be David's descendant, and as was held, was to be a son of the royal stock according to the flesh? **Only Mary and Joseph, who had lived the mystery of his conception and birth, became the first witnesses of a fruitfulness different from that of the flesh, that is, of a fruitfulness of the Spirit.**

St John Paul goes on to state: **The marriage of Mary and Joseph (in which the Church honours Joseph as Mary's spouse, and Mary as his spouse) conceals within itself, at the same time, the mystery of the perfect communion of the persons of the man and the woman in the conjugal pact and also the mystery of that singular continence for the kingdom of heaven.** This continence served, in the history of salvation, the most perfect fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit.....since precisely in **the Nazareth pact of Mary and Joseph in marriage and continence, the Eternal Word was realised.**

Comment: St John Paul clearly indicates in this most significant passage, that in the virginal but nuptial relationship of Mary and Joseph, there is a concrete anticipation of the full nuptial meaning of the body, which the saints as male and female, will enjoy in heaven. Again it is most surprising that commentaries on the TOB do not appear to have appreciated the striking content of this passage. It might be important to note here also, that in the first millennium of

Christianity the majority of priests, who were married men, lived (with the full consent of their wives) what is known as the 'lex continentiae'. This virginal but nuptial state was lived out not only, apparently, in imitation of their virginal Master and His Bride - the Church, in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb over which they presided (in 'persona Christi') but also in imitation of Mary and Joseph whose virginal fruitfulness as husband and wife brought Christ into the world.

Although Celibacy is Superior to Marriage, it does not Devalue it

Page 273



In the section of the TOB entitled "The Superiority of Continence Does Not Devalue Marriage", St John Paul states on page 273: **In proclaiming continence for the kingdom of heaven, Christ fully accepted all that the Creator wrought and instituted from the beginning. Consequently, on the one hand, continence must demonstrate that in his deepest being, man is not only "dual" but also (in his duality) "alone". Nevertheless, on the other hand, what is an invitation to solitude for God in the call to continence for the kingdom of heaven at the same time respects both the 'dual nature of mankind' (that is, his masculinity and femininity) and the dimension of communion of existence that is proper to the person. Whoever, in compliance with Christ's words, correctly comprehends the call to continence for the kingdom of heaven and responds to it, thereby preserves the integral truth of his own humanity. He does this without losing along the way any of the essential elements of the vocation of the person created in God's image and likeness..... Christ's words [i.e. on continence for the kingdom of heaven in Mt 19:11-12] arise from the reality of man's condition. With the same realism, they lead him out toward the call which, in a new way – even though remaining 'dual' by nature, (that is, directed as man toward woman, and as woman toward man) – he is capable of discovering in his solitude, which never ceases to be a personal dimension of everyone's dual nature, a new and even fuller form of intersubjective communion with others.**

Comment: These words of St John Paul here on the superiority of continence over marriage call to mind the teaching of St Jerome (4th Cent) on the different grades of holiness in the Christian community (for St Jerome's exposition of this theme, see his *Letter to Pammachius* - Letter XLVIII). St Jerome categorized holiness according to three classes (virgins, widows and married couples), the highest of which, virginity, **included married couples who had professed vows of perpetual continence**. This practice of continence in marriage (the 'lex continentiae') in the first millennium of the Church, referred to by St Jerome, Church Councils and several of the Early Church Fathers, was lived out by priests several numbers of whom were married men. This practice of the 'lex continentiae' (something which might seem as strange today, please refer to earlier comment on this practice on page 17), in fact, appears to have been the norm in the life of priests in the first millennium of Christianity. After ordination, with the expressed wish of their wives, husbands, who were now priests, lived a life of perpetual continence. There is a close relationship between the sacrament of ordination and, what might be called, an elevated understanding of Marriage, which, as was mentioned earlier, is patterned after Christ's love for his Bride (the Church) and the example of the virginal lives of Mary and Joseph whom the Church has always honoured as husband and wife.

Both States of Life, Celibacy and Marriage, Complement and Interpenetrate Each Other

Pages 277,278



In the section of the TOB entitled “Marriage and Continence Complement Each Other”, St John Paul writes that: **Marriage and continence are neither opposed to each other nor do they divide the human soul (and Christian) community into two camps....But, as it is often said, these basic situations, these two “states”, in a certain sense, explain and complete each other as regards the existence and Christian life of this community..... The complementarity of marriage and continence complete and, in a certain sense, interpenetrate each other..... Both types of love tend to express the conjugal meaning of the body which from the beginning has been inscribed in the personal makeup of man and woman.**

Comment: When Christ was teaching on the subject of marriage (and other matters) during his three years of Public Ministry, several of the apostles had been married men. But after hearing Christ's teaching on marriage they, apparently, lived out with their respective spouses, what is known as the 'lex continentiae' (i.e. continence within marriage, see previous comment), a consecrated form of priestly life so well-known and practiced in the early Church.

This new state might be described as that of ‘**a higher nuptial state**’ than that which they had known ‘**in marriage**’ before. In their lives St John Paul’s words come alive when he writes: Marriage and continence are neither opposed to each other nor do they divide the human soul.... these two “states”, in a certain sense, explain and complete each other. Only in Christ, however, and in his Marriage to his Bride the Church, do these “two states” (i.e. celibacy and marriage) “explain” each other with that of celibacy raised to a higher and holier ‘nuptial state’ than that experienced before.

Christ’s words on Celibacy and their significance for the Theology of the Body

Page 283

St John Paul directs his attention to Christ’s words on continence and what he proposes is their connection with the understanding of the Theology of the Body. He again notes (on page 283) **that the profound truth about the nuptial meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity in the personal make up of the subjectivity of man and woman is deduced from the first chapters of Genesis (especially from Genesis 2:23-25). He states on page 283 (emphasis added): It is necessary to reread and understand Christ’s words about continence precisely in relation to this concept, to this truth about the nuptial meaning of the human body. Only in relation to such a meaning (the nuptial meaning of the body), of the masculinity and femininity of the human person, does the call to voluntary continence for the sake of the kingdom find full warranty and motivation.** He significantly goes on to add (emphasis added): **Only and exclusively in this perspective did Christ say, “He who is able to receive this, let him receive it. (Mt 19:12). With this, he indicated that such continence – although it is above all a gift – can also be received.** That is, it can be drawn and deduced from the concept that **man has his own psychosomatic “I” in its entirety, and especially the masculinity and femininity of this “I” in the reciprocal relationship which is as though by nature inscribed in every human subjectivity.**

Comment: The “I” of each person, according to St John Paul, includes the masculine and feminine of this “I”. In taking the vow of continence, therefore, the person, be they a male or a female, includes also, and at the same time, the other gender, his or her “other self”. St John Paul says that the vow of celibacy can only be understood with this motivation, this truth about the human person, in mind. This reflection on the “I” calls to mind the words of St Paul, “He who loves his wife loves himself” (Eph 5:28), which later St John Paul commented upon saying: “In a certain sense love makes the ‘I’ of the other person his own ‘I’: the ‘I’ of the wife, I [i.e. St John Paul] would say, becomes through love the ‘I’ of the husband” (p. 319).

Celibacy and Knowledge of its essential link with the Nuptial Meaning of the Body

Page 284



St John Paul states that the motivation of love necessary for a life of perpetual continence is found in the knowledge of the nuptial meaning of the body. On page 284, he writes: **On the basis of the same disposition [i.e. the desire of giving oneself “for the kingdom of heaven” in marriage and continence which Jesus explained to the Pharisees in Mt 19] of the personal subject and on the basis of the same nuptial meaning of the being as a body, male or female, there can be formed that love that commits man to marriage for the whole duration of his life. But there can also be formed that love that commits man to a life of continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.** Only on the basis of an adequate understanding of the nuptial meaning of the body can there be formed the **love that commits man to a life of continence.** He goes on to say on page 284 (emphasis added): **In listening to Christ’s words addressed to the disciples about continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 19:11-12), we cannot think that this second kind of choice [i.e. the choice of continence] can be made consciously and freely without reference to one’s masculinity or femininity and to that nuptial meaning which is proper to man precisely in the masculinity or femininity of his being as a personal subject.** Further on, on the same page, he states (emphasis added): **It [i.e. continence for the kingdom of heaven] comes about on the basis of full consciousness of that nuptial meaning which masculinity and femininity contain within themselves. If this choice should come about by way of some artificial “prescinding” from this real wealth of every human subject, it would not appropriately and adequately correspond to the content of Christ’s words in Matthew 19:11-12.**

Comment: St John Paul is stating here that the choice of “continence for the kingdom of heaven” should be made in light of the nuptial truth which is written into our human nature, (i.e. the “nuptial meaning which is proper to man precisely in the masculinity and femininity of his being”). Outside of this nuptial truth, the “choice” is “artificial” and would not “appropriately and adequately correspond to the content of Christ’s words in Matthew 19:11-12”. The decision to opt for ‘continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven’ anticipates on earth what lies ahead in the resurrection. For in the kingdom of heaven, the true meaning of the body will be realised where it will be revealed in its glorified state, a state which as earlier seen is nuptial yet virginal, is male and female in an interpersonal communion reflecting the Communion of Persons in the Trinity of God.



The Call to Continence does not deny but rather affirms the Sacrament of Marriage

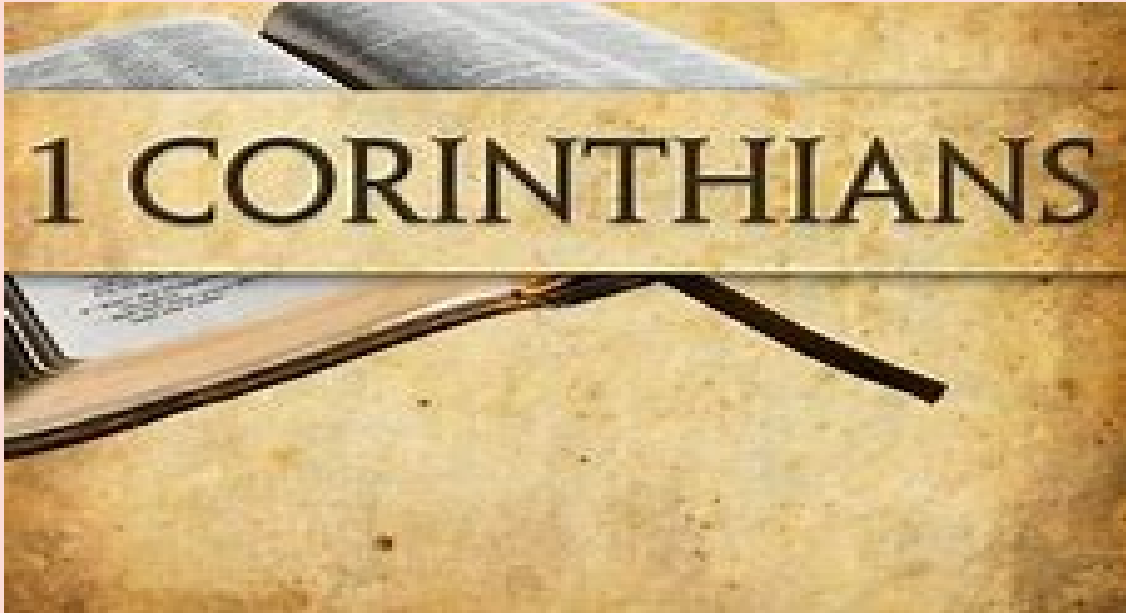
Pages 285,286,287

St John Paul states on page 285: **The realization of this call** [i.e. continence for the kingdom of heaven] **serves in a particular way to confirm the nuptial meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity.** St John Paul refers to **Christ** who **himself was a virgin** and the **Son of the Virgin** stating that the **only key to understanding the sacramentality of marriage is the spousal love of Christ for the Church.** St John Paul concludes his comments on page 286: ‘First, if continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven undoubtedly signifies renunciation, this renunciation is at the same time an affirmation. It is an affirmation that arises from the discovery of a new perspective of the personal realization of oneself “through a sincere gift of oneself” (GS 24). This discovery still lies in a profound interior harmony with the significance of the nuptial meaning of the body, bound “from the beginning” to the masculinity or femininity of a man as a personal subject. Second, although continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is identified with the renunciation of marriage, which in the life of a man and woman gives rise to the family, in no way can one see in this a denial of the essential value of marriage. On the contrary, continence serves indirectly to highlight what is most lasting and most profoundly personal in the vocation to marriage. It highlights that which in the dimensions of temporality (and at the same time in the perspective of the other world) corresponds to the dignity of the personal gift, bound to the nuptial meaning of the body in its masculinity or femininity.’

Comment: Again, St John Paul seems to highlight here that as Christ has a spousal relationship with his Bride, the Church, a relationship that is in the virginal state, man, as male and female, is called likewise to the same nuptial relationship in imitation of Christ and his Bride. This call is manifested by those who practice “continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven”, that witness lived out – as was earlier seen - by Mary and Joseph. Joseph, presently, is the *spouse* of Mary in heaven, in the virginal state. (See TOB P269). With such a spousal understanding in mind, it can rightly be stated that “the priestly and religious vow of celibacy **points to** marriage and **not away** from it”.

St John Paul on St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians Chapter 7

Pages 288,289



On page 288, St John Paul quotes from an important passage in St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians where St Paul states (emphasis added): "If however, someone thinks he is not behaving properly to his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes; he does not sin. Let them marry! But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, **to keep her as his betrothed**, he will do well. So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage does better'. Commenting on this passage, St John Paul writes on page 289: The Apostle teaches that virginity, or voluntary continence, the young woman's abstention from marriage, derives exclusively from a counsel, and given the appropriate circumstances it is better than marriage.....It is not a question of the difference between good and evil, but only between good and better.

Comment: St Paul states in the very important passage referred to above that he who *keeps his betrothed*, but does *not* marry her [i.e. does not have conjugal relations but remains virginal], does *better* than he who marries his betrothed. This manner of life, this nuptial decision, is entirely in keeping with what St John Paul has stated in the previous sections on Celibacy and Marriage. It was also a state lived out by Mary and Joseph on earth and is now, apparently, their glorified nuptial state together in heaven. The Gospels also assume this virginal yet nuptial state when they describe Mary both as Joseph's **betrothed** and **wife**. St Luke writes (emphasis added): "So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee for Judaea, to David's town called Bethlehem.....together with Mary, **his betrothed**, who was with child" (Lk 2:5). This journey to Bethlehem, it is important to note, took place after the angel had told Joseph in a dream, "do not be afraid to take Mary home as **your wife**, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit" (New Jerusalem Bible Mt 1:20, emphasis added).

St John Paul and Chapter 5 of Ephesians

The Two are One Body - Christ and the Church and Husband and Wife

Pages 314,315,316

St John Paul writes on page 314: **In the preceding reflections** [i.e. his earlier reflections] on Ephesians 5:21-33, we drew attention especially to the analogy of the relationship which exists between Christ and his Church, and of that which exists between husband and wife united by the bond of marriageWe must note that within the range of the fundamental Pauline analogy – Christ and his Church, on the one hand, and man and woman as spouses on the other – there is a supplementary analogy: the analogy of the head and the body..... the Church, as such, is formed by Christ; it is constituted by him in its essential part, as the body is by the head. The union of the body with the head is above all of an organic nature. To put it simply, it is the somatic union of the human organism. The biological union is founded directly on this organic union, inasmuch as it can be said that the body lives by the head (even if at the same time, though in a different way, the head lives by the body).....On page 315 he writes: In the whole text of Ephesians (5:21-33), especially in the first part with which we are dealing (5:22-23), the author speaks as if in marriage also the husband is the “head of the wife,” and the wife “the body of the husband,” as if the married couple formed one organic union. This can find its basis in the text of Genesis, which speaks of one flesh (Gn 2:24).

In respect of this union, St John Paul observes on page 315 that: **The head, together with the body, constitutes a subject** (in the physical and metaphysical sense), an organism, a human person, a being. There is no doubt that Christ is a subject different from the Church. However, in virtue of a particular relationship he is united with her as an organic union of head and body. The Church is so strongly, so essentially, herself in virtue of a mystical union with Christ. Is it possible to say the same thing of the spouses, of the man and the woman united by the marriage bond? If the author of Ephesians sees also in marriage the analogy of the union of head and body, this analogy in a certain sense seems to apply to marriage in consideration of the union which Christ constitutes with the Church, and the Church with Christ.

Comment: St John Paul, commenting on St Paul’s analogy of head and body in the Letter to the Ephesians, emphasises the truth that Christ is inseparably united with his Bride, the Church. As Christ is ‘one Body’ with his Bride, the Church, both here on earth and in heaven, so also are the husband and his wife who are united in Christ (in the sacrament of marriage) ‘one body’, both here on earth and also in heaven. What is of ‘one body’ cannot be separated, and so, what Christ has united together on earth will be united as one in heaven. However, as was earlier seen “there is no marriage in heaven” (i.e. no conjugal relations); marriage (or more properly speaking the ‘nuptial union’) continues in heaven in the virginal state.



Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church. In the Blood and Water flowing from the side of Christ on Mount Calvary, his Bride (the Church) was formed, the Two are One Body

“Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church”

Page 319

St John Paul refers to the text of Ephesians which says: “Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church... He who loves his wife loves himself.... Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies” (Eph 5: 25-28). Commenting on these verses St John Paul writes on page 319: **Here the motive of “one flesh” returns again. In the above mentioned phrase [i.e. “Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies”] and in the subsequent phrases it is not only taken up again, but also clarified. If husbands should love their wives as their own bodies, this means that uni-subjectivity is based on bi-subjectivity and does not have a real but intentional character [i.e. something that is desired]. The wife’s body is not the husband’s own body, but it must be loved like his own body. It is therefore a question of unity, not in the ontological sense, but in the moral sense – unity through love. “He who loves his wife loves himself”. This phrase confirms the character of unity still more. In a certain sense, love makes the ‘I’ of the other person his own ‘I’: the ‘I’ of the wife, I would say, becomes through love the ‘I’ of the husband.**

Note on the term “bi-subjectivity”. Bi-subjectivity – according to St John Paul’s understanding - denotes two persons communicating as one subject. A subject normally communicates with an object. However here, the ‘other’ **is not an object but a subject**. It denotes reciprocal love where the other is seen as a “second self”. The person receiving is, curiously, the same person - as St John Paul points out - that is giving. It brings to mind the significant words of St Paul when speaking of Christ’s love for his bride, the Church, when he writes (emphasis added): “We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful, **for he cannot disown his own self**” (2 Tim 2:13).

Comment: The unity of the husband and wife in Ephesians is not, according to St John Paul, a unity in the ontological sense but, rather in the sacramental sense (i.e. a unity brought about from that love which flows from Christ). Although the husband’s body is not, **ontologically**, his wife’s body and vice versa, St John Paul states that this **“bi-subjectivity”** (i.e. male and female expressed as one subject) is desired. Both the husband and wife seek that unity which

sees the other as a “second self”, for this is how Christ loves his bride, the Church. In the beginning, however, it should be noted, when Eve was formed from the side of her husband (Adam) in the Garden this bi-subjectivity was an ontological reality, for **the two were one body**. However, this **bi-subjectivity** was lost on account of sin; their love for each other (being ashamed in their nakedness) was not a union of true love. The unity of love of husband and wife described in Ephesians points to what might be described as a **new-ontological order**, that order of love originally intended for our first parents in **the new creation** in heaven won by Christ’s redeeming death and which will be lived eternally by the saints in heaven.

The truth about the Unity of the Spouses found in the unity of Christ and the Church

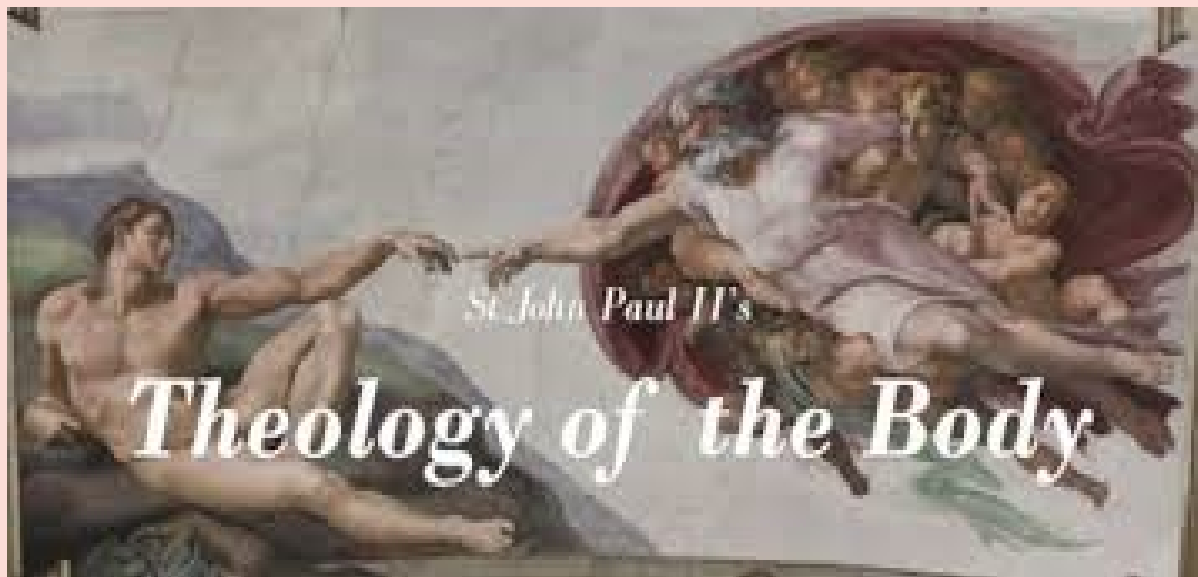
Pages 321,322

Commenting on St Paul’s most significant passage in Ephesians 5:29-32, St John Paul writes on page 321 (emphasis added): **The author of Ephesians writes: “No man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body” (Eph 5:29-30).** After this verse the author deems it opportune to cite what can be considered the fundamental text on marriage in the entire Bible, the text contained in Genesis 2:24: **“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”(Eph 5:31).** It is possible to deduce from the immediate context of Ephesians that the citation from Genesis (2:24) is necessary here **not so much to recall the unity of the spouses**, determined from the beginning in the work of creation. But it is necessary to present **the mystery of Christ with the Church from which the author deduces the truth about the unity of the spouses**. St John Paul goes on to say that this citing of Genesis 2:24 is the keystone to the whole text when he writes (emphasis added): **This is the most important point of the whole text, in a certain sense the keystone.** The author of Ephesians sums up in these words all that he had said previously, tracing the analogy and **presenting the similarity between the unity of the spouses and the unity of Christ with the Church**. Citing the words of Genesis 2:24, the author points out where the bases of this analogy are to be sought. They are to be sought in the line which, in God’s salvific plan, unites marriage, as the most ancient revelation (manifestation) of the plan in the created world, with the definitive revelation and manifestation – the revelation that “Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25), conferring on his redemptive love a **spousal character and meaning**.

Comment: This is a very important assertion by St John Paul, namely that Christ’s redeeming love has a “spousal character and meaning” linked to the “truth of the unity of the spouses” *in the beginning*. The Saviour of the world came down from heaven to redeem us, and the redemption he has won for us is spousal in nature; it has a “spousal character and meaning”. What was lost in the beginning (i.e. the nuptial state of innocence and love which God intended for our ‘first parents’, “the truth about the unity of the spouses”, and of being naked and unashamed in the Garden) is restored to all humanity in the nuptial love which Christ has revealed for his Bride, the Church. This is the grace which Christ, our Redeemer, has won for us all. It is spousal in nature. Christ’s spousal love for his Bride is revealed in the love of the spouses on earth whom he has now redeemed. It is not a question therefore of one form of love supplanting the other, of the first supplanting the second, that is of Christ’s love for his Bride supplanting that of the spouses, but, rather, of the love of the spouses being rooted in and built upon Christ, whereby Christ’s love for his Bride is made manifest in the love of the spouses whom Christ has redeemed. This point is key to the main search of this study, namely: “What, according to St John Paul, is the nuptial joy of the saints in heaven?” For, commenting on *the*

Theology of the Body, several scholars give the impression that the Wedding Feast in heaven to which Christ is inviting us to in the resurrection supplants and replaces that which God has brought together on earth. Marriage on earth, therefore, it is **incorrectly** assumed, has ended. All that lies ahead for the saints in heaven is the Wedding Feast of Christ. The ‘first’ has supplanted the ‘second’ for the second no longer has any place. This, it is strongly proposed, **is not what St John Paul has written**. Rather St John Paul teaches here (and this he describes as “the keystone” – that is, his central and most important point), and throughout the TOB, that it is not a question of a celebration of ‘one wedding’ over ‘the other’, of Christ’s Wedding over that which God brought together on earth, but, rather, **it is the celebration of both**. And not only both in an unrelated manner but of both co-existing together, with the wedding of every spousal couple which has been redeemed brought eternally into the Wedding of Christ, made “members of his body” (Eph 5:30) and “living stones” (1 Pet 2:5) in the New Temple of Christ. Again, this central point of the TOB, appears to have been missed or overlooked in commentaries to date.

This brings St John Paul to the crowning stage of his thesis, to a new and fresh understanding of the sacraments in the Church as linked to the joy mentioned above where the two weddings (Christ with the Church and that of our own with our respective spouse) are intertwined and inseparable. This he will later state on page 341 is “the more ancient and fundamental meaning of the term “sacrament”.” For St John Paul will later equate the “great mystery” referred to in Ephesians 5:32 (i.e. “This is a great mystery and I mean in reference to Christ and his Church”, Eph 5:32) with the true meaning of the term “sacrament”, Gk. “mystérion”). Before examining the significance of the essential linking of these two concepts (i.e. that of “sacrament” with that of the “great mystery” in Ephesians 5:32), St John Paul first notes how the truth of this “great mystery” resonates throughout the whole of Scripture, where it serves as the vital continuity between the Old and the New Testament.



“This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and his Church” (Eph 5:32). The continuity between the most ancient covenant of marriage and the definitive covenant of marriage established by Christ

Page 322

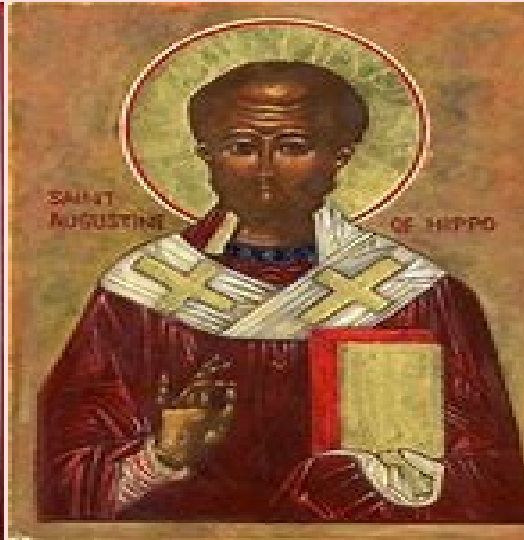
St John Paul notes how the very significant verse in Ephesians 5:32 (i.e. “This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and his Church” Eph 5:32) was written immediately after the author of Ephesians cited Genesis 2:24 (“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” Gn 2:24) in Ephesians 5:31. The significance of the term “mystery” (Gk *mysterion*), he therefore concludes, is not therefore restricted to one particular moment in time but resonates throughout the whole of Scripture, throughout the whole of salvation history beginning with the first couple whom God created. This, according to St John Paul, is **the central theme of all revelation**. Christ’s love for his Bride the Church – the “great mystery” - unveils the mystery hidden in God’s mind from the beginning of creation. On page 322, St John Paul writes (emphasis added): **Then one will more easily understand why the author, after citing the words of Gn 2:24 writes: “This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and his Church” (Eph 5:32). In the overall context of Ephesians and likewise in the wider context of the words of Sacred Scripture, which reveal God’s salvific plan “from the beginning”, one must admit that here the term *mysterion* signifies the mystery, first of all hidden in God’s mind, and later revealed in the history of man. Indeed it is a question here of a “great” mystery given its importance. That mystery, as God’s salvific plan in regard to humanity, is in a certain sense the central theme of all revelation, its central reality....Precisely along the line of this revelation and accomplishment, St Paul sets in relief the continuity between the most ancient covenant which God established by constituting marriage in the work of creation, and the definitive covenant. After having loved the Church and given himself up for her, in that covenant Christ is united to her in a spousal way, corresponding to the image of the spouses. This continuity of God’s salvific initiative constitutes the great analogy contained in Ephesians. The continuity of God’s salvific initiative signifies the continuity and even the identity of the mystery – of the great mystery in the different phases of its revelation and therefore, in a certain sense, of its manifestation – and at the same time its accomplishment.**



Comment: In this “great mystery” of Christ’s spousal love for his Bride, the Church, St John Paul, as set out earlier on pages 321-322, sees a vital “continuity” between the “most ancient covenant” of marriage established by God *in the beginning* (but subsequently lost through sin) and “the definitive covenant” wrought by Christ. This “mystery” of God’s spousal love is, according to St John Paul, “the central theme of all revelation”; it is, what might be termed, “the nuptial thread” linking the whole of Scripture together. In this sense, and based on what St John Paul has written, it can be said that all of **Scripture has a spousal character and meaning**, rooted in and culminating with Christ’s redeeming love for his Bride on the Cross. Without an appreciation of this nuptial theme the main thrust in Scripture is lost. This necessary nuptial linking of the New Testament with the Old calls to mind the well-known biblical principle of the Church (derived for the words of St Augustine) which simply states: “The New Testament is hidden in the Old and the Old is made perfect in the New”. Christ, our redeemer, (the heart of the NT) has restored the original state of innocence and love which God intended for our first parents and for all humanity ‘in the beginning’ but which was lost on account of sin (the recurring theme of the OT). Commenting on the blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ on Mount Calvary (where the Old Testament finds fulfillment in the New), several of the Early Church Fathers (among whom are St John Chrysostom and St Augustine – see below) described this most sacred moment as “the New Eve formed from the side of the New Adam”. The Garden of Eden, once closed on account of sin, has been re-opened by Christ’s redeeming love for his Bride, the Church. What once was lost has now been found. The mystery of Christ’s love for his Bride, corresponding to the original state of innocence and love which God intended in the beginning for the first couple (and for all humanity) in the Garden of Eden, is now offered to every person who longs to be formed anew - according to this nuptial state - by Christ. This nuptial grace is made available to each and every one of us in the blood and water flowing from the side of Christ, the fountain and source of Christ’s sacraments in the Church.



St John Chrysostom



St Augustine

St John Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.)

“There came from his side blood and water..... It was from his side, then, that Christ formed the Church, as from the side of Adam he formed Eve. That is why, in his account of the first man, Moses [in the Book of Genesis] has the words, ‘bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh’, giving us a hint here of the Master’s side. For as at that time God took a rib from Adam’s side and formed woman, so Christ gave us blood and water from his side and formed the Church. Just as then he took the rib while Adam was in a deep sleep, so now he gave the blood and water after his death. Have you seen how Christ has united his bride to himself? Have you seen with what kind of food he feeds us all?” St. John Chrysostom: *Instructions to Catechumens* 3:13-19

St Augustine (350-430 A.D.)

“The Evangelist has expressed himself cautiously; not struck, or wounded, but opened His side: whereby was opened the gate of life, from whence the sacraments of the Church flowed, without which we cannot enter into that life which is the true life: And forthwith came there out blood and water.To shadow forth this, the woman was made out of the side of the sleeping man; for this second Adam bowed His head, and slept on the cross, that out of that which came therefrom, there might be formed a wife for Him.” St Thomas Aquinas quoting St. Augustine *Catena Aurea: Gospel of John: Ch:19*

The “Great Mystery” and Sacrament

Pages 322,323



In this regard (i.e. where the term “mystery” in the phrase “the great **mystery**” of Christ’s love for the Church is seen as synonymous with the term “**sacrament**”), St John Paul writes on page 322 (emphasis added): **Is it possible to understand that great mystery as a sacrament? In the text quoted by us, is the author of Ephesians.....speaking of the bases of the sacramentality of the whole Christian life and in particular of the bases of the sacramentality of marriage.....Is not “sacrament” synonymous with “mystery”?** Later, St John Paul will write how the sacraments of the Church (i.e. the seven sacraments and the concept of ‘the Church as sacrament’) **make up the new sacramental economy which is constituted on the basis of the sacrament of redemption, deriving from the spousal gracing of the Church on the part of Christ** (p. 340).

Comment: St John Paul, in the TOB, is restoring the Church to an understanding of the first and original meaning of the sacraments in the Church. The Sacraments of the Church – in light of St John Paul’s writings - are not to be seen as separated and unrelated to one another but, together and in unison, serve to bring about the “**the spousal gracing of the Church on the part of Christ**”, where the Groom and Bride and all who have been redeemed in the blood and water of Christ live out the nuptial joy of Christ’s love for his Bride, the Church.

Sacrament: A ‘Visible Sign’ of “the Mystery for All Ages Hidden in God” manifested (a) in the Relationship of Christ to the Church and (b) in the Relationship of Husband and Wife according to that form of Love “in the beginning”

Pages 332,333



In the union of husband and wife, in the sacrament of marriage, St John Paul writes that “the eternal divine mystery” is made visible; that which is invisible has been made visible. This “visibility of the Invisible” in the sacrament of marriage, St John Paul significantly adds was “already” made visible at “the very ‘origin’ of the theological history of man”, where in the Book of Genesis - which St John Paul quotes - it states: “For this reason [i.e. because of the union of our first parents] a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” Gn 2:24. The sacrament of marriage instituted by Christ is inseparably linked with that state of marriage which God had originally intended for the first couple (and for all humanity) in the beginning. This central point in St John Paul’s TOB is confirmed in the Letter to the Ephesians, whereby St Paul teaches that the “mystery hidden for all ages in God” is revealed first of all in Christ’s love for his Bride the Church and, in turn because of Christ’s inseparable union with the Church, is seen in the relationship of husband and wife in the sacrament of marriage according to that form of love God intended *in the beginning*.

St John Paul writes on page 332 (emphasis added): **Indeed, in presenting the relationship of Christ to the Church in the image of the conjugal union of husband and wife, the author of this letter speaks in the most general and at the same time fundamental way. He speaks not only of the fulfilment of the eternal divine mystery, but also of the way in which that mystery is expressed in the visible order, of the way in which it has become visible, and therefore has entered into the sphere of sign.** By the term “sign” we mean here the “visibility of the Invisible.” The mystery for ages hidden in God – that is, the invisible – has become visible first of all in the historical event of Christ. The relationship of Christ to the Church, which is defined in Ephesians as “a great mystery”, constitutes the fulfilment and the concretization of the visibility of the mystery itself. However, St John Paul does not leave the visibility of the “mystery for ages hidden in God” there (i.e. with the relationship of Christ to the Church), for he continues on pages 332 and 333 (emphasis added): **The author of Ephesians compares the**

indissoluble relationship of Christ to his Church to the relationship between husband and wife, that is, to marriage. At the same time he refers to the words of Genesis (2:24) [i.e. “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” Gn 2:24], which by God’s creative act **originally instituted marriage**. Thus the author of Ephesians turns our attention to **what was already presented** – in the context of the mystery of creation – as the “visibility of the Invisible,” to the very “origin” of the theological history of man. It can be said that **the visible sign of marriage “in the beginning”, in as much as it is linked to the visible sign of Christ and the Church, to the summit of the salvific economy of God, transfers the eternal plan of love into the historical dimension and makes it the foundation of the whole sacramental order**. It is a special merit of the author of Ephesians that he brought **these two signs together** [i.e. Christ and the Church and the union of husband and wife *in the beginning* and in the sacrament of marriage], **and made of them one great sign, that is, a great sacrament** (*sacramentum magnum*).



In the beginning the ‘two’ (i.e. the first couple) were truly ‘one body’

Comment: As “the mystery for all ages hidden in God” is made visible in Christ’s love for his Church, which, in turn, is seen in the relationship of husband and wife in marriage who live according to that form of love which God intended “in the beginning”, we have an anticipation here in “visible” form of the blessed lives of the saints in their nuptial joy in heaven.

In the state of original innocence man, male and female, constituted the “primordial sacrament” – the visible sign of the love hidden in God from all eternity. Before sin, man bore in his soul the fruit of eternal “election in Christ”

Pages 333, 334, 335

Following on from his examination of Ephesians Ch 5 in the previous section, St John Paul proceeds to summarize his earlier analysis of the first chapters of Genesis and the centrality of the marriage theme found there. In this respect, St John Paul writes on page 333: **Man appears in the visible world as the highest expression of the divine gift, because he bears within himself the interior dimension of the gift. With it he brings into the world his particular likeness to God, whereby he transcends and dominates also his ‘visibility’ in the world, his**

corporality, his masculinity or femininity, his nakedness. Resulting from this likeness there is also the primordial awareness of the conjugal significance of the body, pervaded by the mystery of original innocence. These phrases sum up in a few words the result of the analyses devoted to the first chapters of Genesis, in relation to the words with which Christ, in his conversation with the Pharisees on the subject of marriage and its indissolubility, referred to the “beginning.” St John Paul goes on to label this original nuptial state as the “primordial sacrament” (i.e. the first outward visible sign of the mystery hidden in God), which he states was man’s share in the “supernatural grace” of “eternal election in Christ”. He writes on page 334 (emphasis added): **Thus, in this dimension, there is constituted a primordial sacrament, understood as a sign which effectively transmits in the visible world the mystery hidden from eternity in God. This is the mystery of truth and love, the mystery of the divine life in which man really shares.....It is the original innocence which initiates this participation.....Ephesians leads us to approach this situation – that is, the state of man before original sin [i.e. the primordial sacrament] – from the point of view of the mystery hidden in God from eternity.** In fact, we read in the first phrases of the letter that “God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.”...Before sin, man bore in his soul the fruit of eternal election in Christ...That primordial (or original) holiness and purity were expressed...in the fact that, although both were “naked”, they were not “ashamed” (Gn 2:25). Man, male and female, shared from the beginning in this supernatural grace.... **Comparing the testimony of the “beginning” found in the first chapters of Genesis, with the testimony of Ephesians, one must deduce that the reality of man’s creation was already imbued by the perennial election of man in Christ.Man, male and female, shared from the beginning in this supernatural gift.** On page 335 he states (emphasis added): **This supernatural endowment, which took place before original sin, that is, the grace of justice and original innocence – an endowment which was the fruit of man’s election in Christ before the ages – was accomplished precisely in reference to him, to the beloved One, while anticipating chronologically his coming in the body.**

Comment: Again, it must be said, the above significant reflections expressed by St John Paul do not appear to have been properly or adequately considered by existing commentaries on the TOB. The first man, the first male and female (Adam and Eve), was, according to St John Paul, created with conjugal awareness but was also created in the (original) state of innocence. If there had been no Fall through sin, the love of the first couple for each other would have been the “primordial sacrament” revealing concretely, in their bodies the inner love and communion within God. Their nuptial innocence and communion as male and female would have been the outward visible sign, the sacrament of “the mystery hidden for eternity in God”. This outward visible sign was, however, lost to the world. Only with the coming of Christ and the perfect love he showed (and continues to show) for his Bride would this visible sign be once again made manifest in the world. For Christ – the Second Adam - reveals that love and innocence which God had originally intended to be shown by the first Adam in the Garden of Eden. Through the new life offered by Christ in his sacraments (all of which, as was seen earlier, revolve around the “great mystery” of marriage “in the beginning”), that form of love which he expressed for his Bride – the Church, a virginal but nuptial union, may now be lived by those (as male and female) who have been made ‘living members of the Body of Christ’ and ‘living stones in the New Temple’.

Marriage is “the Central Point of the ‘Sacrament of Creation’”

Page 333-336

St John Paul labels this entire section of his work, which includes also those points referred to in the previous few paragraphs outlined above, under the heading *Marriage is the Central Point of the “Sacrament of Creation”*. This is a very significant title in so far as it is a succinct description of what is in the mind of St John Paul and what appears to be the main theme he wishes to convey in this study. Marriage is the central point in God’s design for creation. There is a hint here in this title that St John Paul sees marriage not only as the “sacrament of creation” but also as, what might be described to be, “the Sacrament of Re-Creation in Christ” and therefore that Marriage holds the central theme to **the whole** of salvation history, from beginning to end. St John Paul writes on page 335 (emphasis added): **According to these words [i.e. Genesis 2:24 “A man.....cleaves to his wife and become one flesh”], marriage is a sacrament inasmuch as it is an integral part and, I would say, the central point of the “sacrament of creation”. In this sense it is the primordial sacrament.....Not only this, it [i.e. the institution of marriage] expresses at the same time the salvific initiative of the Creator, corresponding to the eternal election of man, which Ephesians speaks of.....In this way one must recognize that the original sacrament of creation draws its efficacy from the Beloved Son (cf. Eph 1:6 where it speaks of the “grace which he gave us in his Beloved Son”).**



“It was from his side, then, that Christ formed the Church, as from the side of Adam he formed Eve.....For as at that time God took a rib from Adam’s side and formed woman, so Christ gave us blood and water from his side and formed the Church. Just as then he took the rib while Adam was in a deep sleep, so now he gave the blood and water after his death. Have you seen how Christ has united his bride to himself?”

(St John Chrysostom Instructions to Catechumens 3:13-19)

Comment: The original state of holiness and purity in marriage which God intended *in the beginning*, of the first couple being naked and unashamed in the Garden, was the fruit of the “supernatural gift” of “the perennial election of man in Christ” (see previous section). This nuptial grace, which was lost on account of original sin (and, as a consequence, our first parents were expelled from the Garden), was restored to us by Christ’s redeeming love on the Cross. From this viewpoint of salvation history, marriage is seen as the central point not only of “Creation” but of our “Re-Creation in Christ”. In this sense **the whole of Scripture is bound together with a nuptial thread**. On the Cross, having offered himself for the salvation of the world, Christ could therefore say to the repentant thief (Lk 23:43, emphasis added) “**today** you will be with me in Paradise”. Paradise (Gk παράδεισος – paradeisos) is the Greek word for Garden. And so the words of Jesus might also be translated “Today, you will be with me in the Garden of Eden”. Quite soon after uttering these words, **on that very same day**, when Jesus had died and the Roman soldier pierced his side, the Garden of Eden was re-opened in the blood and water flowing from his side. Several of the Early Church Fathers described this redeeming moment on Mount Calvary, this re-creation in Christ, in nuptial terms as *the New Eve flowing from the side of the New Adam* (see quotations which were presented five pages earlier, St. John Chrysostom, 347-407 A.D, in his *Instructions to Catechumens* 3:13-19 and St Augustine, 354-430 A.D, *St Thomas Aquinas quoting St. Augustine Catena Aurea: Gospel of John: Ch:19*).





In the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, there is already the sign of Christ's love for his Bride, the Church, shown on the Cross on Mount Calvary

“The Loss of the Original Sacrament is Restored with Redemption in the Marriage-Sacrament”

Page 336,338

In this section of the TOB, on page 336, St John Paul - as he has done repeatedly - writes that in marriage, even in that state of being “dimmed by the heritage of original sin”, we have direct contact with the “great mystery” referred to in the Letter to the Ephesians. “Marriage” is, he writes, “the platform for the actuation of God’s eternal designs”. St John Paul writes: **We know however that the heritage of grace was driven out of the human heart when the first covenant [i.e. the original state of innocence and love of the first couple intended by God] with the Creator was broken. The perspective of procreation, instead of being illumined by the heritage of original grace, given by God as soon as he infused a rational soul, became dimmed by the heritage of original sin.....Nonetheless, even in this state, that is, in the state of man’s hereditary sinfulness, marriage never ceased being the figure of that sacrament we read about in Ephesians (Eph 5: 21-33) and which the author of that letter does not hesitate to call a “great mystery”.** St John Paul goes on to ask (emphasis added): Can we not perhaps deduce that **marriage has remained the platform for the actuation of God’s eternal designs**, according to which the sacrament of creation had drawn near to men **and had prepared them for the sacrament of redemption**, introducing them to the dimension of the work of salvation? And he answers: The analysis of Ephesians, especially the classic text (5:21-33), seems to lean towards such a conclusion.

Later in the same section of the TOB, St John Paul writes on page 338 (emphasis added): **So the mystery hidden in God from all eternity – the mystery that in the beginning, in the sacrament of creation, became a visible reality through the union of the first man and woman in the**

perspective of marriage – **becomes in the sacrament of redemption a visible reality of the indissoluble union of Christ with the Church, which the author of Ephesians presents as the nuptial union of spouses, husband and wife.**

Comment: We get a sense from what St John Paul writes above that from the very beginning, ever since the Fall, the first couple (and all subsequent couples) - male and female - were waiting for their nuptial relationship to be redeemed. This redeeming grace was won for us by that love which Christ has shown for his Bride, the Church, in the “sacrament of redemption”. The spouses, having been redeemed by Christ, become the visible sign of the “indissoluble union of Christ with the Church”, which now is being celebrated in heaven.

**In heaven, the joy of the saints
is “united with marriage as a sacrament”**

Pages 350,351



Under a section entitled “The Marriage Sacrament Is an Effective Sign of God’s Saving Power” and recalling vital points that were earlier made, St John Paul writes on page 350 (emphasis added): **The origin of man in the world is united with marriage as a sacrament, and its future is also inscribed in it.** This is not merely in the historical dimensions [i.e. here on earth], **but also in the eschatological** [i.e. in heaven]. Clarifying the full meaning of this statement St John Paul adds on page 350: Christ stated that marriage – the sacrament of the origin of man in the temporal visible world – does not pertain to the eschatological reality of the future world. However, called to participate in this future world by means of the resurrection of the body, man is the **same man, male and female, whose origin in the temporal visible world is linked with marriage as the primordial sacrament** of the mystery of creation. Rather, **every man** called to share in the resurrection, brings this vocation into the temporal world by means of the marriage of his parents. Thus, Christ’s words reveal indirectly the significance of **the sacrament of marriage for the participation of men, sons and daughters, in the future resurrection.....**In this sense marriage as a sacrament....bears within itself the germ of man’s eschatological future.

Comment: Again, as consistently stated throughout the TOB, St John Paul confirms that although marriage and procreation (as known in the temporal world) will not exist in heaven, the nuptial state of being male and female as willed by God in *the beginning* (the primordial sacrament), will continue. The male will continue to exist in heaven with the female in a nuptial relationship and vice versa in a “communion of persons”, as was seen earlier, modelled after the Blessed Trinity

**“Marriage as a sacrament is presupposed on the one hand
and on the other hand is rediscovered”**

Page 351



Further on, in a section of the TOB entitled “The Redemptive and Spousal Dimension of Love” and calling to mind his earlier points made in reference to the “great mystery” in Ephesians 5:32, St John Paul writes on page 351 (emphasis added): **We find ourselves in the great analogy where marriage as a sacrament is presupposed on the one hand, and, on the other hand, is rediscovered.** It is presupposed as the sacrament of the “beginning” of mankind united to the mystery of creation. However, it is rediscovered as the fruit of the spousal love of Christ and of the Church linked with the mystery of the redemption. **Addressing spouses directly, the author of Ephesians exhorts them to mould their reciprocal relationship on this model of the spousal union of Christ and his Church.**

Comment: Two points might be made here:

(1) St John Paul states (as he has repeatedly done throughout his book) that although marriage, as was experienced on earth will not continue in heaven (i.e. in its carnal form), marriage, as a sacrament of “Christ’s love for the Church”, will.

(2) Christ's spousal union with his Bride is revealed in the love of those husbands and wives whom he has redeemed on earth in the sacrament of marriage and whose love they are called upon to model and imitate. It is not, therefore, a question of one form of love over the other (i.e. of Christ's love for his Bride the Church supplanting the love of husbands and wives) but rather of both co-existing together, of Christ's love for his Bride living and made manifest in the love of the husband for his wife. Both continue in the mystery of Christ's redemptive love in heaven. Again, it appears, this central point of the TOB has not been adequately considered by commentaries to date.

Christ's redemptive love is Spousal in nature

Pages 352,353,354

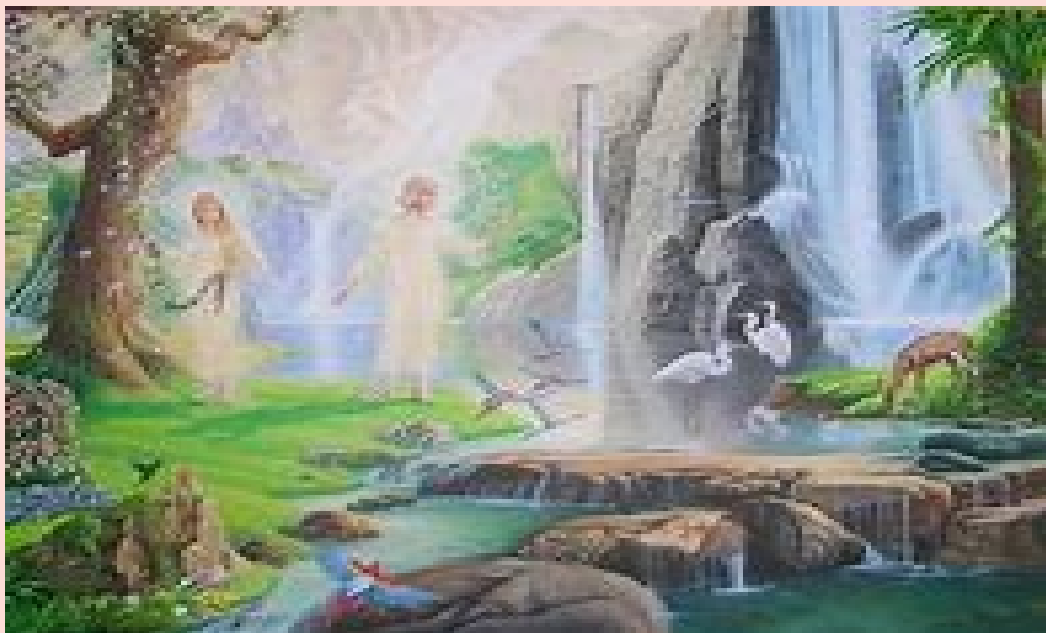


In a very significant section entitled “The Redemptive and Spousal Dimension of Love” St. John Paul links, inextricably together, Christ's redemption of the world with his spousal love of mankind. These two “dimensions” of Christ love for us, i.e. the redemptive and spousal dimensions, are fused into one. The male and female spouses, St John Paul states, are graced (are redeemed) by the sacrament of Christ's love for his Bride, the Church. St John Paul writes on page 352 (emphasis added): **The Pauline image of marriage, inscribed in the “great mystery” of Christ and of the Church, brings together the redemptive dimension and the spousal dimension of love. In a certain sense it fuses these two dimensions into one.** Christ has become the spouse of the Church. He has married the Church as a bride, because “He has given himself up for her” (Eph 5:25). Through marriage as a sacrament (as one of the sacraments of the Church) both these dimensions of love, the spousal and the redemptive, together with the grace of the sacrament, permeate the life of the spouses.

Significantly, St John Paul adds, however, that **all of mankind** (and not only married couples) is graced by the spousal love of Christ. Not only are married couples, according to St John Paul

“newly created” in Christ’s spousal love, but also all “of man in general”. St John Paul writes on page 352 (emphasis added): **The spousal significance of the body in its masculinity and femininity was manifested for the first time in the mystery of creation against the background of man’s original innocence. This significance is linked in the image of the Letter to the Ephesians with the redemptive significance, and in this way it is confirmed and in a certain sense, “newly created.”** This is important in regard to marriage and to the Christian vocation of husbands and wives. The text of the Letter to the Ephesians (5:21-33) is directly addressed to them and speaks especially to them. However, that linking of the spousal significance of the body with its redemptive significance **is equally essential and valid for the understanding of man in general**, for the fundamental problem of understanding him and for the self-comprehension of his being in the world. It is obvious that we cannot exclude from this problem **the question on the meaning of being a body, on the sense of being, as a body, man and woman.** These questions were posed for the first time in relation to the analysis of the human beginning, in the context of Genesis. In a certain sense, that very context demanded that they should be posed. It is equally demanded by the classic text of the Letter to the Ephesians. **The great mystery of the union of Christ to the Church obliges us to link the spousal significance of the body with its redemptive significance.** In this link the spouses find the answer to the question concerning the meaning of “being a body,” **and not only they**, although this text of the Apostle’s letter is addressed especially to them.

Comment: St John Paul states clearly above that all of us, whether we are married or single, will experience the spousal and redemptive significance of the Body - as “newly created” in its masculinity and femininity - in heaven.



John Paul next addresses those men and women who make a **vow of celibacy**. He wishes it to be understood that they, “in a special way”, seek to “confirm with their life” the spousal significance of the body modelled on Christ’s love for the Church. St John Paul writes on page 353: **The Pauline image of the great mystery of Christ and of the Church also spoke indirectly of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. In this celibacy, both dimensions of love, the spousal and redemptive, are reciprocally united in a way different from that of marriage**, according to diverse proportions. Is not perhaps that spousal love wherewith Christ

“loved the Church”—his bride—”and gave himself up for her,” at the same time the fullest incarnation of the ideal of celibacy for the kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 19:12)? Is not support found precisely in this by all those—men and women—who, choosing the same ideal, desire to link the spousal dimension of love with the redemptive dimension according to the model of Christ himself? **They wish to confirm with their life that the spousal significance of the body—of its masculinity and femininity—profoundly inscribed in the essential structure of the human person,** has been opened in a new way on the part of Christ and with the example of his life, to the hope united to the redemption of the body. Thus, the grace of the mystery of the redemption bears fruit also—rather bears fruit **in a special way**—with the vocation to celibacy for the kingdom of heaven.



Comment: St John Paul states above that the same nuptial experience in heaven, as male and female, will also be enjoyed by those who, in this life, have professed vows of Celibacy.

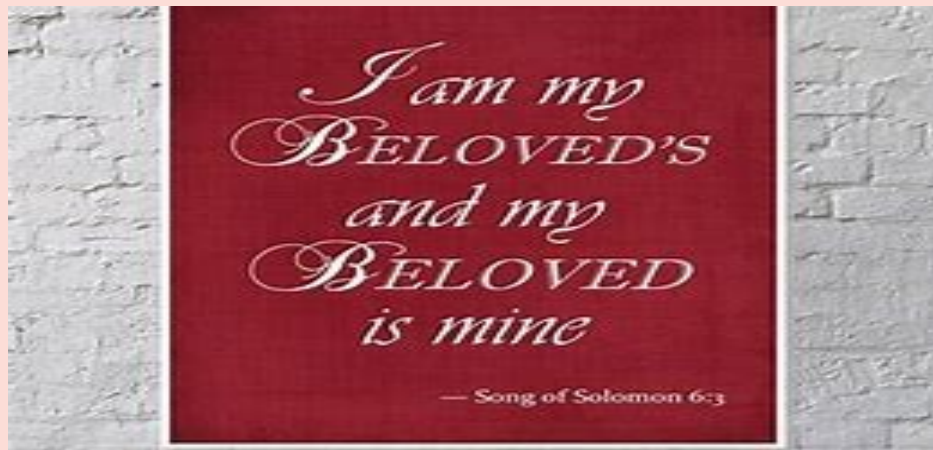
In this section, St John Paul’s once again emphasizes that the spousal grace of Christ is offered to all mankind (and not only – as may be thought - married couples). Although acknowledging that the Letter to the Ephesians is explicitly directed towards married couples, he states that its nuptial message is intended for every male and female person whom God has re-created in “this new sacrament of redemption”. “Does it not”, he writes, “embrace every man and, in a certain sense, the whole of creation...?” It is written into the ‘newly created body’ of every human being that has been incorporated into Christ. St John Paul writes on page 353 (emphasis added): **The text of Ephesians (5:21-33) does not speak of it [i.e. the mystery of marriage *in the beginning*] explicitly. It is addressed to spouses and constructed according to the image of marriage, which by analogy explains the union of Christ with the Church—a union in both redemptive and spousal love together. Is it not perhaps precisely this love which, as the living and vivifying expression of the mystery of the redemption, goes beyond the circle of the recipients of the letter circumscribed by the analogy of marriage? Does it not embrace every man and, in a certain sense, the whole of creation as indicated by the Pauline text on the redemption of the body in Romans (cf. Rom 8:23)? The great sacrament in this sense is a new sacrament of man in Christ and in the Church. It is the sacrament “of man and of the world,” just as the creation of man, male and female, in the image of God, was the original sacrament of man and of the world. In this new sacrament of redemption marriage is organically inscribed, just as it was inscribed in the original sacrament of creation. Man, who “from the beginning” is male and female, 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 one finds also the essential answer to the question on the significance of the human body, and the significance of the masculinity and femininity of the human person. **The union of Christ with the Church permits us to understand in what way the spousal significance of the body is completed with the redemptive significance, and this in the diverse ways of life and in diverse situations. It is not only in marriage or in continence (that is, virginity and celibacy), but also, for example, in the many forms of human suffering, indeed, in the very birth and death of man.**

Comment: St John Paul states in the above passage, as he has done repeatedly throughout the TOB, that **every person** is created by God to exist in heaven in a graced nuptial state, as male and female.

Linking the Song of Songs and the Book of Tobit with Ephesians

Pages 370-380



St John Paul quotes certain important verses in the Song of Songs on page 370 (emphasis added):

You have ravished my heart, **my sister, my bride,**
You have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes,
With one bead of your necklace.
How sweet are you caresses **my sister, my bride.**

Commenting on these verses St John Paul writes on page 370: **From these words what is of essential importance for the Theology of the Body – and in this case for the theology of the sacramental sign of marriage – to know who the female “you” is for the male “I” and vice versa. The groom in the Song of Songs exclaims: “You are all – beautiful, my beloved” (Sg 4:7) and calls her “my sister, my bride” (Sg:4:9). He does not call her by name, but uses expressions that say more.**

Comment: St John Paul writes that, in the Song of Songs, the groom speaks a ‘new language’ in respect of his bride, whereby he does not address her by name, but speaks of her as his “beloved” and “sister”. This calls to mind the original state of love in the Garden of Eden, “the primordial sacrament”, where both groom and bride shared the one name “Adam” (see earlier comment on the TOB at page 7, under the heading “the Hebrew name/term “Adam”) and in

which both groom and bride were not only husband and wife but were also, and significantly, brother and sister. This duality of being both husband and wife and brother and sister was earlier referred to in a comment made on a passage written by St John Paul on page 74 of the TOB.

Further significant comments on the Song of Songs and the Book of Tobit

St John Paul concludes the TOB with further references to the Song of Songs and the Book of Tobit where, as he has done repeatedly elsewhere, he notes how the “language of the body” (which he describes as ‘liturgical language’ or the ‘language of the sacraments’), **enables the spouses to arrive at another level of love where “eros” is transformed into “agape”**. He writes on page 375: **It is as though that in which the human eros closes its horizon is still opened, through Paul’s words, to another horizon of love that speaks another language, the love that seems to emerge from another dimension of the person, and which calls, invites to another communion. This love has been called *agape* and *agape* brings the eros to completion by purifying it.** Linking this love with St Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians, St John Paul closes the TOB by writing on page 379: **In exhorting spouses to defer to each other “out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21), and in urging them, consequently, to show respect in their conjugal relationship, Ephesians seems to point out – in keeping with Pauline tradition - chastity as a virtue and as a gift. In this way, through the virtue and still more through the gift (“life according to the Spirit”) the mutual attraction of masculinity and femininity spiritually matures. Both the man and the woman, getting away from concupiscence, find the proper dimension of the freedom of the gift, united to femininity and masculinity in the true spousal significance of the body. Thus liturgical language, that is, the language of the sacrament and of the *mysterium*, becomes in their life and in their living together the language of the body in a depth, simplicity and beauty hitherto altogether unknown..... In this way, conjugal life becomes in a certain sense liturgical.**



Comment: What a wonderful way to end the TOB describing the spousal love of the couple raised to “another horizon of love” in the “life according to the Spirit” which reveals to them the true meaning of (a) the mystery of human love *in the beginning* (b) the sacramental life of the Liturgy and (c) the “agape love” that will be revealed to each couple in the resurrection when our bodies will finally be freed from “concupiscence”.



3. Conclusion

(a) The Nuptial State that St John Paul refers to in the TOB is offered to every person in the Resurrection

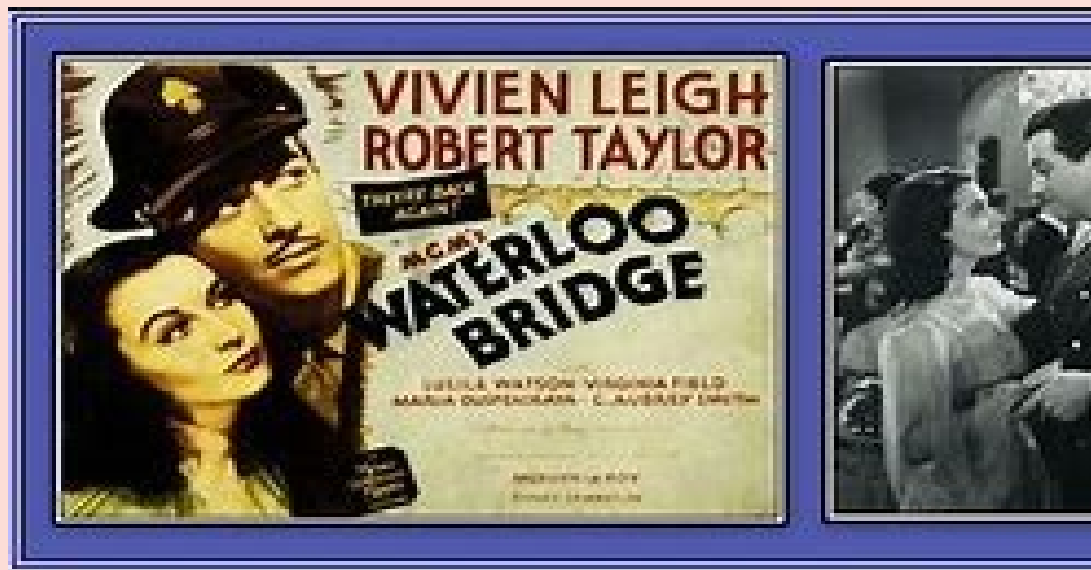


St John Paul's main point in *the Theology of the Body*, repeatedly seen throughout this study, is that each of us, **whether single, married or celibate, will, by the grace of Christ, experience in our bodies in the resurrection with our chosen spouse that nuptial-virginal state intended by God *in the beginning* for the first couple, as male and female, in the Garden of Eden.** This hope – reflected in the wings of St John Paul - is offered to us, of **one day being united in an eternal communion of love with our chosen spouse in the Wedding Feast of Christ with his Bride, the Church, in heaven. Human love is made divine.**

(b) The Nuptial State that St John Paul refers to in the TOB and the classic film, “Waterloo Bridge”

This hope – presented in St John Paul's writings - must be offered to our world today. For so often in life, in the relationships of men and women – and even in marriage, things do not always work out as we would like. This is particularly evident in the event of a broken or failed

relationship accompanied by the dark feelings of guilt and shame, of undeserved love. At times this experience of loneliness and emptiness becomes unbearable - a state so well depicted in the classic film “Waterloo Bridge”. For there, at the very end of the film, Roy



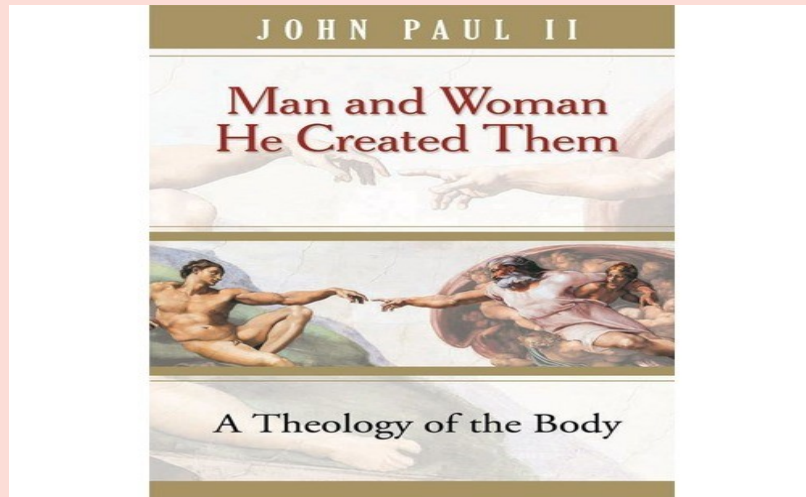
(played by the actor Robert Taylor) stood alone at the very place where both he and Myra (played by the actress Vivien Leigh) first met on Waterloo Bridge, remembering what might have been. She felt she had betrayed him and tragically died in her distress, when all along he had never given up on her. There on the Bridge, thirty or so years later and never apparently having met or chosen anyone else, he remembered the first words she spoke to him as if she was still alive; love that continues beyond the grave. Regardless of what had happened they were made for each other, and, in the hope Roy felt in his heart, would one day be united forever in heaven. This film depicts what St John Paul **concludes in the TOB concerning the Nuptial State offered by Christ to everyone in heaven. The hope that is depicted so well in the film is made real by Christ’s death for us on the Cross.**

**(c) The Nuptial State that St John Paul refers to in the TOB is real,
It is not symbolic**

One point must be emphasized before we end this short reflection on St John Paul’s writings and that is that the hope which St John Paul refers to throughout the *Theology of the Body* is **real**. St John Paul does not merely use figurative language that speaks only with symbolic intent. **For he describes something real that lies ahead in the resurrection, a hope we can grasp onto.** For this hope will be revealed **in the body, in tangible form, even as it is spiritualized.** It means, as is stated in the front cover of St John Paul’s book, that human love has a place in the Divine Plan. For just as God had a real plan for the first couple in the Garden of Eden, so too God extends the same grace in bodily form to every couple he has predestined in Christ for eternal love. We become members of Christ’s body and Christ’s body is real.

Some might object to this real nuptial hope stating that what is presented in the *Theology of the Body* should only be read with figurative intent. For, it will be suggested, the account of the first couple in Genesis, Adam and Eve, has no historical foundation, and so, any development by St John Paul of this “great mystery” *in the beginning* is likewise presented by St John Paul without ‘historical’ or ‘bodily’ intent. This position could not be further from the truth, for,

even if someone was to object to what is clearly evident in his writings, the Church firmly teaches **in the objective reality of the original innocence of the first couple in Paradise, a state that was real but which was subsequently lost on account of the Fall**. The reality, therefore, of the unity of the first couple is without question.



(d) The reality of the Nuptial Blessing which St John Paul’s proposes in the TOB is echoed in another biblical study on the Early Chapters of Genesis

In a series of video recordings entitled “Marriage in the Early Chapters of Genesis” which have recently been uploaded onto YouTube, and, in support of the reality of the nuptial blessing St John Paul alludes to, it is proposed, on the basis of what is written in the first nine chapters of Genesis, that **the manner in which the bride was formed from the side of her husband is so real that it, in fact, carried on after Adam and Eve for a number of other ‘blessed couples’ up to the time of Abraham (albeit in the fallen state of being subject to concupiscence and death), at which time, it ended**. This, it is proposed in the series of videos, is what the inspired author of Genesis (traditionally held to be Moses) wishes the reader to see. The biblical evidence for this nuptial state, it is proposed, is overwhelming, and indicates that the blessing with which God blessed humanity *in the beginning* was real. This nuptial state *in the beginning* points to that future nuptial state which St John Paul presents in the *Theology of the Body* and, please God, lies ahead for us on account of the redeeming sacrifice of Christ. This is the hope we all possess. For on Mount Calvary, in the blood and water which flowed from Christ on the Cross - as the new Eve formed from the side of the new Adam - the (nuptial) gates of Paradise have been opened for us.

(e) Views or reactions to this written commentary

We would, respectfully, ask that those who may wish to express any view on this commentary, particularly if they are negative, would refer to the specific passages quoted from the TOB and provide their own interpretation on the stated passages of St John Paul.

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