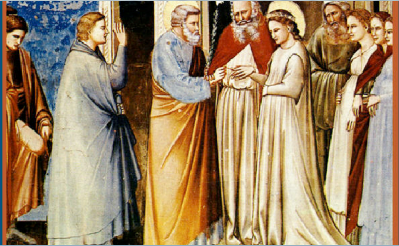


Why Sexual Desires?



MARRIAGE

7.1 HEART OF THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

This is a great mystery (that a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh), and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32)

7.2 SPOUSAL ANALOGY

Understanding redemption through the analogy of spousal love and sexual union is at the heart of the Theology of the Body.

7.3 SEXUAL UNION

The deeper meaning at the heart of the marital act is a kind of surrender of self and our self will, of a total self donation that makes this a suitable sacramental sign of matrimony.

7.4 LANGUAGE OF THE BODY

The body speaks by means of gestures and reactions, of the whole dynamism of tension and enjoyments whose direct source is the body in its masculinity and femininity, the body in its action and interaction.

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gn 2:24)

The text of Ephesians 5 appear as the compendium or summa, in some sense, of the teaching about God and man which was brought to fulfillment by Christ. (JP II)

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, is himself its Saviour. As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body.

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church (Eph 5:21-32)

The passage speaks of the two meanings of ‘Body’ as the Body of Christ the Church and as the male-female human Body which is made for sexual union in marriage.

The Theology of the Body is necessary to interpret this passage as it is also its Key and Classic text.

We should consider this passage as the crowning of the themes and truths in Sacred Scripture. (JP II)

7.1 After dealing with Celibacy, the Pope now looks at the Sacrament of Marriage. When it is lived according to God’s plan, it plunges spouses right into the heart of the mystery of Christ. Sexuality and the conjugal union in marriage in every culture become in a sense a way for everyone to know something of the Gospel of Christ.

Redeemed sexual desire is the result of an eros that is purified and is in line with the ethos of redemption. It will show that the conjugal instinct inscribed in our humanity is God’s plan to lead us to him in and through our sensuality and sexuality.

The analogy of the body-head becomes the analogy of groom-bride. (JP II)

The Spousal Analogy works to help us understand the relationship of Christ and his Church, and also to penetrate more deeply into Christian marriage. (JP II)

7.2 The head - body analogy of Christ and his Church presents spouses as one organic union, one organism.

In marriage, spouses are called to mutual subjection through their mutual submission and self donation to each other. All this is to be done 'out of reverence for Christ'. To be subject is to be completely given. Therefore mutual subjection means a reciprocal donation of self. It is the living out of the spousal meaning of their bodies, which calls them to mutual and sincere self-giving.

Christ who gave up his body for his Bride is the source and model of this self giving. Giving ourselves this way 'out of reverence for Christ' is a spiritually mature form of the mutual attraction of the sexes. This comes from experiencing redeemed sexual attraction and sexual desires in our lives.

Through sexual union, they become one flesh. Thus the indissoluble union of Christ and his Church is imaged through the indissolubility of sacramental marriage.

Without appreciating and living the mystery of the indissoluble union of Christ and his Church or of God and his People, it is difficult to understand the teaching of Christian revelation on the indissolubility of marriages.

This is My Body Given Up for You St Paul's linking of the 'one flesh' union with the union of Christ and the

Church is the most important point of the whole text, in a sense, the keystone. (JP II)

7.3 Sexual union is the sacramental sign of marriage. The sacramentality of the body is uniquely expressed in the conjugal union.

Jesus at his crucifixion, in his self gift to the Father, is at the same time giving himself for the Church. 'Redeeming love transform itself into spousal love by Christ's act of giving himself for the Church, with the same redeeming act. In this way, the mystery of the redemption of the body conceals within itself in some sense the mystery "of the marriage of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7)' (JP II)

Just as the words of Christ (This is my Body given up for you) at the institution of the Eucharist at the last supper 'were made flesh' on Calvary, spouses in the conjugal union 'make flesh' the words of their matrimonial vows. In a sense, the spouses through their bodily and sexual union say to each other: 'This is my body given up for you'. The marital act consummates and actualize marriage, and the wedding vows are renewed and become flesh when 'the two become one flesh'.

Authentic marital love between the spouses is healing, redemptive and salvific. It participates both in the mystery of creation (through procreation), but also in the mystery of redemption.

Just as Christ's love for his Church makes her holy, holiness for us then is not a matter of doing but of 'letting it be done to us' (Luk 1:38). It is the Bride's response of love to the gift of the Bridegroom. (JP II)

The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. (CCC 1617) The language of the body becomes the

language of the liturgy, because it is on its basis, on its foundation, that the sacramental sign of marriage is built. (JP II)

7.4 Conjugal life can then in a sense be liturgical, when spouses through the 'language of the body' transfer the invisible truths expressed in liturgical language to the visible world.

Sexual union is prophetic if it proclaims the mystery of God. But there can be false prophets if we speak lies with the language of our body.

Carnal love or bodily sexual love is meant to express the language of agape. Christ's love is characterized by four particular qualities.

First, Christ gives his body freely. 'No one takes my life from me, I lay it down of my own accord.' (Jn 10:18). Secondly he gives his life totally, without reservation and unconditionally: 'He loved them to the last.' (Jn 13:1) Thirdly he gives his body faithfully. 'I am with you always.' (Mt 28:20) And lastly he gives his body fruitfully. 'I came that they may have life.' (Jn 10:10)

Free (human), total, faithful and fruitful love then are the characteristics of marriage and conjugal love. (HV 9) Ultimately all questions on sexual morality can be answered by asking if this moral act images God's free, total, faithful and fruitful love or does it not?