

Audience 10

We are trying to understand the meaning of the unity and indissolubility of marriage by looking at the words of Christ when he referred to what it meant “in the beginning” in Genesis.

To understand original unity, we have to look at man in his entirety - in the riches of creation on which The Theology of The Body is based. This study which started out with man being “alone” must also include through the communion of persons.

We recall in Genesis that man said “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...”, and because of this we understand that “man’s” understanding of himself encompassed both the masculine and feminine as though there were two unions of the Divine and humanity, and both unions experienced the same supernatural solitude. In effect, two ways of being a body as well as a “man” both of which completed each other. Two levels of existence which depend on each other and complete each other, as well as two ways of being aware of the meaning of the body.

Genesis 2:23 shows that femininity discovers its meaning in the presence of masculinity, while masculinity discovers itself and is made worthy through femininity. The sexual act, which is an essential part of the person and not just a characteristic, shows us that man is a unique, never to be repeated, creation, which is established by the body as “he” or “she”. The presence of masculinity and femininity alongside each other, and together with each other, shows the richness of man throughout history as well as salvation history.

Although the “unity” in Genesis is expressed in the marital act, the bible tells us that sex, masculinity and femininity are basic characteristics of man both male and female which allows them to become one flesh, and to submit their humanity to the blessing of fertility, but this whole process doesn’t stop at the surface of our sexuality. We have to examine the body and sex in the full understanding of man and the “communion of persons”. We have to see it in light of the revelation of the body from the beginning.

“A man cleaves to his wife” and “they become one flesh” remind us that when man and woman join together in the conjugal act as “one flesh”, they are bound together in the mystery of creation. This means reliving the original value of man which emerges from the mystery of solitude before God. Becoming “one flesh” is a bond created by God through which we discover our own humanity in original unity and the duality of mutual attraction.

Sex is not just a basic human instinct. The mutual expression of sex surpasses the original solitude of the body, and recognizes the body of the second person (the second “self”) as one’s own.

All of this is tied together with choice. Genesis tells us man and women were created for unity, but it also indicates that through the unity they become one flesh, and right from the beginning it was a union of choice. A man “leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife” which shows that a man by nature belongs to his parents, but cleaves to his wife by choice, as does the woman.

As we are created in the image of God in so far as we form a true communion of persons, Christ appeals to the text in Genesis, and shows us that this is the model for the communion of persons, and that it applied not only in the beginning, but for all time.

It is through the two-fold solitude that we see man’s self-determination, in other words the ability to choose which is based on his self-consciousness. Through being a body, and that body being also male and female, mankind unites so closely as to become one flesh, and through that unity man becomes aware of the meaning of the body through mutual self-giving of the persons. Genesis reveals that each union of man and woman shows us the original full meaning of the body, and in a way, renews the mystery of creation. Woman was taken out of man, becomes wife, and through becoming a mother she becomes mother of the living. Procreation is rooted in creation, and reproduces its mystery.