

## **THEOLOGY OF THE BODY**

The Theology of The Body (ToB) is Pope John Paul II's teaching about the meaning being male and female with respect to sexuality and desire. The body makes visible the invisible, the spiritual and the divine. We are made in God's image, so in the body we see God made visible. God is love, and the three persons on the trinity live in an eternal exchange of love, and we are destined to share in that love. God created us male and female so that we could image his love by giving ourselves as a sincere gift to each other.

Pope John also tells us that our sexual love is meant to image the union of God with humanity. Christ left his father in heaven, he left the home of his mother on earth, and He gave up his body for his Bride (the Church) so that we might become one flesh with him. The Pope describes the Eucharist as the sacrament of the Bridegroom and Bride. God made us male and female right from the start "to express the relationship between man and woman", to live in a "holy communion" that foreshadows *the* Holy Communion between Christ and The Church. God wants to "marry" us and to impregnate us with his divine life, and live with us in an eternal exchange of love.

The Pope starts his teaching with the marriage of Adam and Eve in Genesis, and ends with the marriage of Christ and The Church. During his series the Pope tells us that our morals are skewed today due to original sin, and that to have a totally happy life, we have to ignore the media, our peers, our entire society, and turn back our lusts to the beginning, to the way we were created.

God as Christ (the Groom) freely gives us his complete love (the gift). The church (the Bride) freely receives the gift and freely returns the complete gift to God. If the gift is fruitful, and if we are faithful, it impregnates us with the love of God and salvation. Man and women image God in this. The man freely and faithfully gives himself as the gift to his wife; she freely and faithfully receives his gift, and freely and faithfully returns the gift, and if it is God's will the couple will have a child (bear fruit).

This teaching also applies to celibates who also give themselves as a gift. Priests for example are the "fathers", the congregation the children, and if the gift is fruitful, people will grow in faith and love.

Pope John Paul tells us that Christ did not come to apply restrictive rules, but to free us from the rules – not free to break the rules but free to fulfill them. For example, if we do not intend to murder anyone, then we don't need the civil law or the commandment "thou shall not kill". By understanding his teachings about our bodies and sexuality, we will find the church rules are not restrictive, but will give us freedom to live a happy and full life.